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p. 16

1950s  
steam in  
**COLOR**

p. 38



*plus*

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Penn Central  
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the Sacramento  
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# This Issue



## On our cover

Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo operated one of the carferry lines on the lower Great Lakes. Keith Sirman coll., courtesy James A. Brown

## Features

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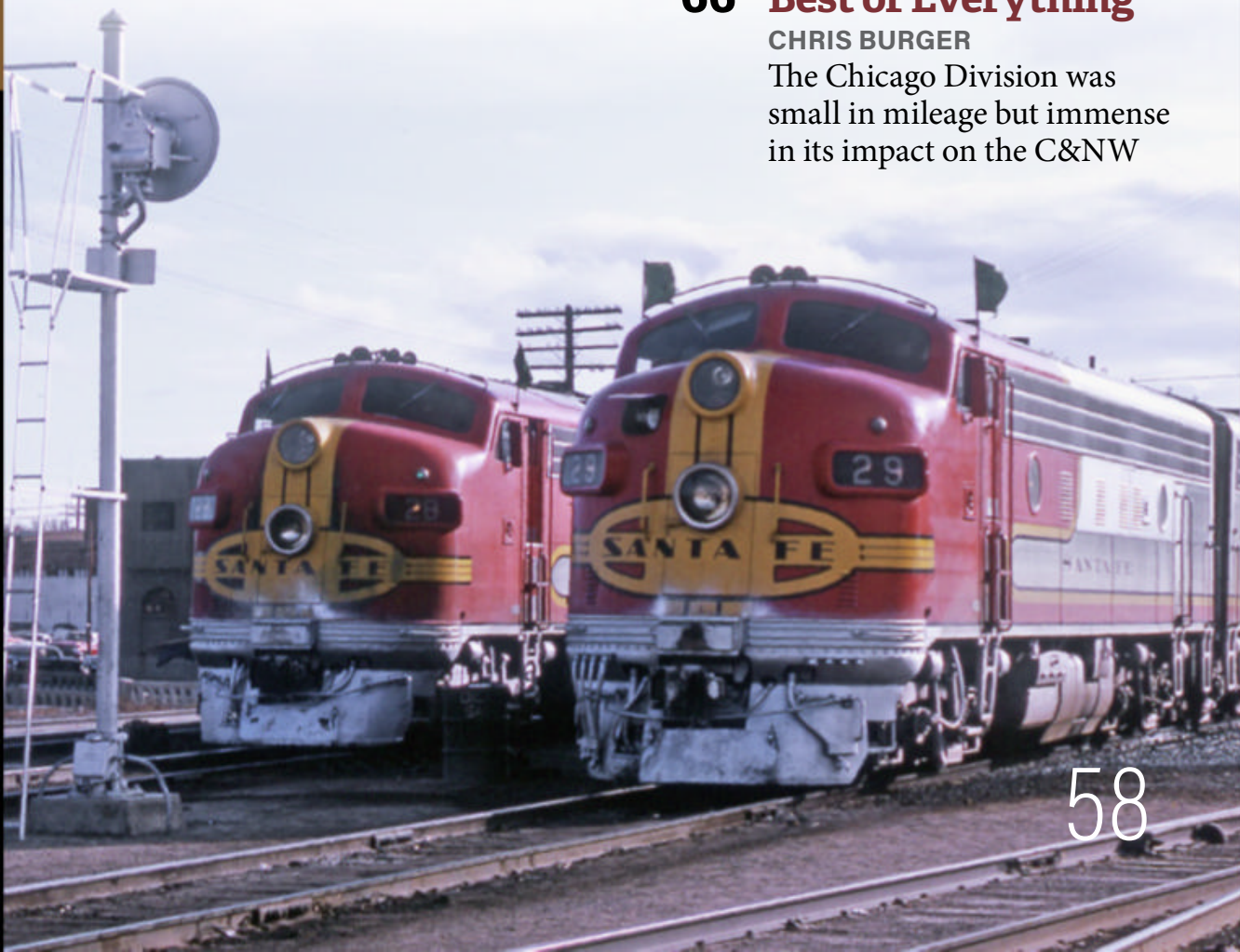


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# J. David Ingles, 1941–2020

**The fourth entry in the staff list at right**, for Contributing Editor, marks the last appearance of the name J. David Ingles on a Kalmbach masthead. Its absence next issue will be a first since 1971. Dave, whose extraordinary tenure began 49 years ago when he came to TRAINS magazine as associate editor, passed away on October 4 at age 79 after a brief illness.

“J.D.I.” held a number of positions with TRAINS over the decades, including a 1987–1992 stint as editor, a title he also held on the short-lived TRAINS ILLUSTRATED. From CLASSIC TRAINS’ launch in 2000 until his retirement in 2018, Dave and I were this magazine’s two principal staffers. As contributing editor, he played an active role in producing the magazine and its special editions until just days before his death. He loved his work.

Those of you familiar with the 100 or so articles Dave wrote for these pages know his biography: son and grandson of railroaders, raised in south-suburban Chicago and southeast Michigan, newspaper reporter in central Illinois, omnivorous photographer and 35mm slide collector, early student of railroad diesel fleets, copious note-taker, avid train-rider always in quest of “new mileage.” This background — coupled with his insatiable curiosity, phenomenal memory, wide circle of acquaintances, and deep knowledge of geography — made Dave the perfect staffer for CLASSIC TRAINS. The magazine wouldn’t have been what it is without him.

For many at Kalmbach — including me — Dave Ingles was a friend, mentor, and trusted, big-hearted colleague. He will be deeply missed.

Robert S. McGonigal  
EDITOR



Dave Ingles had been with Kalmbach 26 years at the time of this 1997 photo. Kevin P. Keefe



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A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

# HeadEnd

## WE MISS . . .

Tractors bustling around big stations towing carts loaded with mail and express shipments, as here at Kansas City. Linn H. Westcott

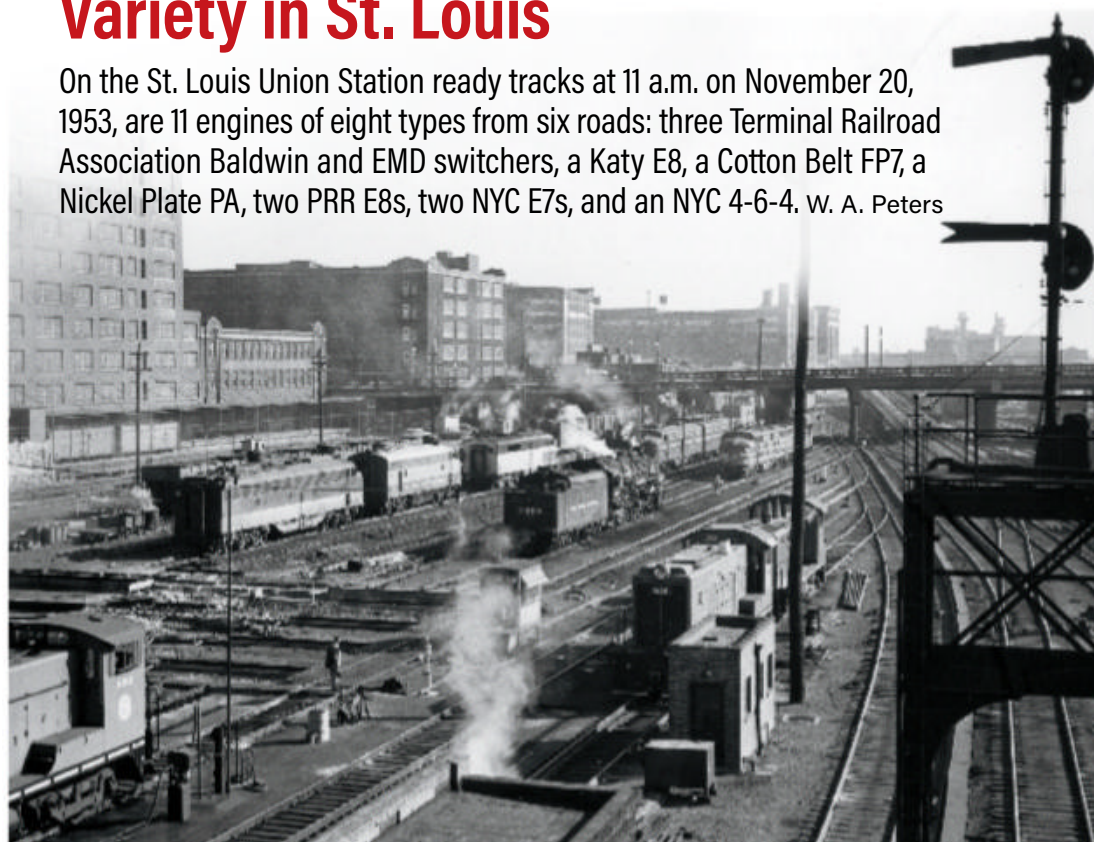


## Plow on a passenger train

Delaware & Hudson wasn't a road to stand on ceremony. If it had been, we probably wouldn't be seeing a Jordan spreader coupled ahead of the RS2s powering the *Laurentian* at Rouses Point, N.Y., on a snowy day in March 1962. Richard E. Samsel, Richard Jahn collection

## Variety in St. Louis

On the St. Louis Union Station ready tracks at 11 a.m. on November 20, 1953, are 11 engines of eight types from six roads: three Terminal Railroad Association Baldwin and EMD switchers, a Katy E8, a Cotton Belt FP7, a Nickel Plate PA, two PRR E8s, two NYC E7s, and an NYC 4-6-4. W. A. Peters

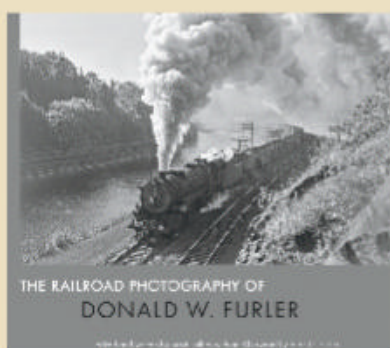


## 4-6-6-4 heater car

Just before the April 30, 1954, end of Clinchfield's passenger train, the steam generator in regularly assigned FP7 200 quit on northbound No. 37. A more than adequate source of steam — and power — took over at Erwin, Tenn.: 4-6-6-4 653, which headed next morning's 38 out of Elkhorn City. Freight F3 803 was added at Erwin to provide power south of Rocky, N.C., where the Challenger was cut off because coal and water facilities had been removed south of there. C. K. Marsh Jr.



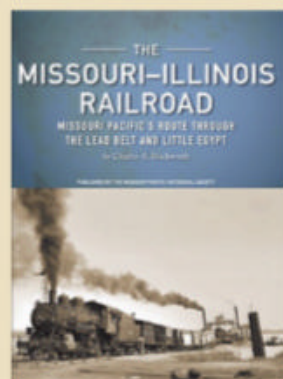
## Reviews



### The Railroad Photography of Donald W. Furler

By Scott Lothes. Center for Railroad Photography & Art, Madison, Wis. 216 pages. \$60.

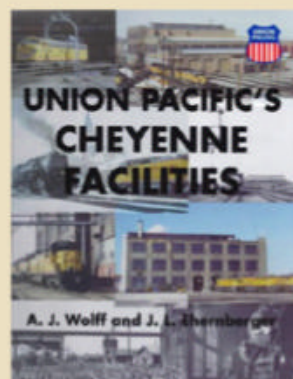
The greats of railroad photography are well known. At least we thought they were. Enter the (re)-discovery of the work of Donald W. Furler, thanks to the Center for Railroad Photography & Art. First published in *TRAINS* in the 1940s and '50s, and rarely since, Furler's evocative photography provides a look at pre-diesel railroading. The book features 200 images of Northeast action, mostly steam in the 1940s and '50s. A thorough biographical sketch supplements the detailed captions and provides insight into the man behind the camera. A welcome departure from other similar photo books is the inclusion here of maps with photo locations on the endpapers. CRP&A has a history of producing high-quality photo books from its archives, and this is another fine example. — *Brian Schmidt*



### The Missouri-Illinois Railroad: Missouri Pacific's Route through the Lead Belt and Little Egypt

By Charles A. Duckworth. Missouri Pacific Historical Society, Omaha, Nebr. 376 pages. \$76.

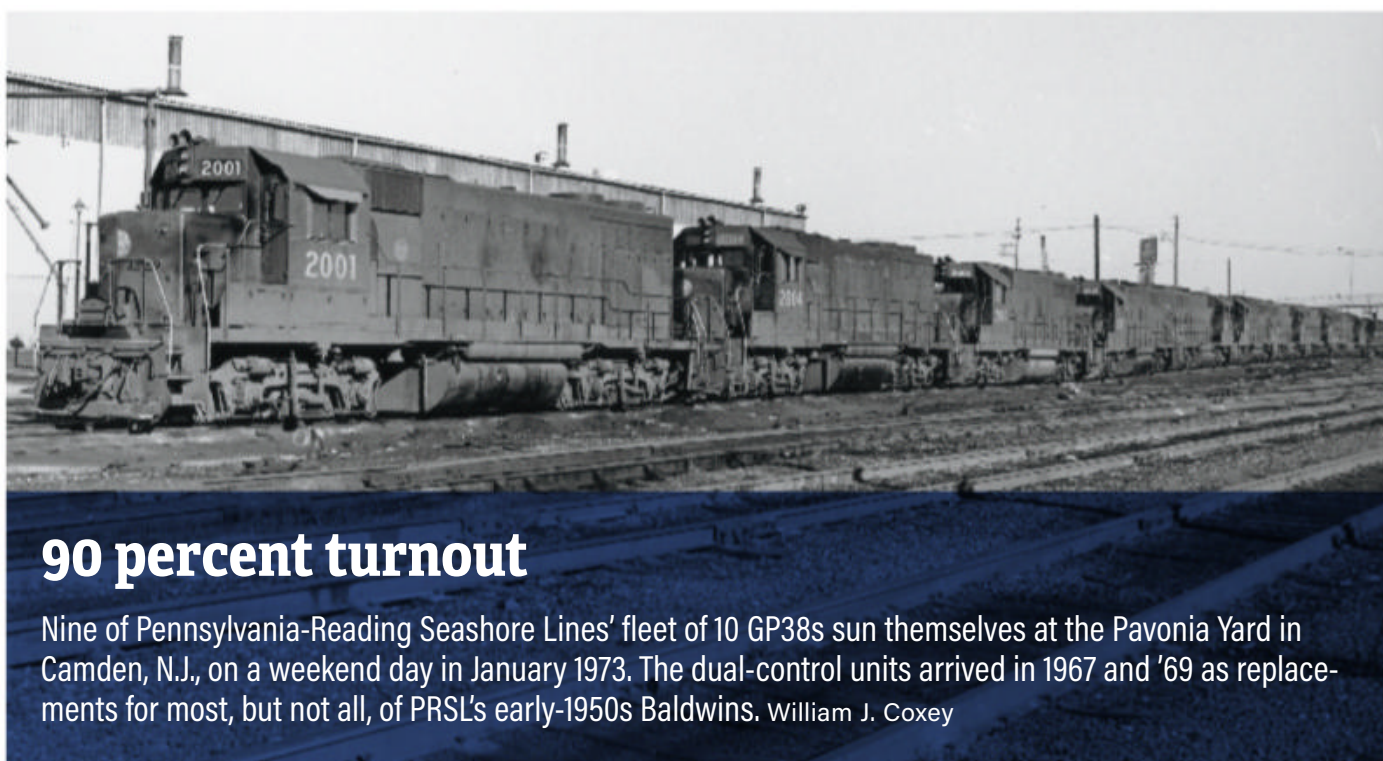
This fine study of Missouri Pacific's Missouri-Illinois subsidiary, which ran 172 miles in far southern Illinois and southeast Missouri, traces the road's history from the 1880s until its 1978 absorption by its parent. There are chapters devoted to such topics as locomotives; stations and customers; rolling stock; freight and passenger trains; yards, roundhouses, and shops — even wrecks and accidents. Of particular interest is the section on the physical manifestation of the hyphen in the M-I's name: the ferry operation that moved cars across the Mississippi River until 1961. The nearly 700 illustrations are mostly black-and-white, and there's a 37-photo color section at the end. — *Robert S. McGonigal*



### Union Pacific's Cheyenne Facilities

By A. J. Wolff and J. L. Ehernberger. Challenger Publications, Cheyenne, Wyo. 128 pages. \$59.95.

Mention of the classic (pre-1982) UP conjures up images of big locomotives on big trains: Big Boys and Challengers, turbines and double diesels, racing across Nebraska and Wyoming. UP needed big facilities to handle these behemoths, and that's what it built in their home territory around Cheyenne, Wyo. This updated second printing presents a mix of black-and-white and color images of UP's Cheyenne operations, including roundhouses, shops, yards, and stations. The text is limited to chapter introductions, the authors opting to tell the story with photos and captions. Supporting documents include building and track diagrams and passenger train schedules. This book will be a welcome reference for when Big Boy 4014 rolls again. — *B.S.*



## 90 percent turnout

Nine of Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines' fleet of 10 GP38s sun themselves at the Pavonia Yard in Camden, N.J., on a weekend day in January 1973. The dual-control units arrived in 1967 and '69 as replacements for most, but not all, of PRSL's early-1950s Baldwins. William J. Coxey

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## Why the wide Wootten?

Chesapeake & Ohio 2951, at Manassas, Va., in 1951, has C&O-style numberboards and tender — but what's with the big Wootten firebox? The 2-10-2 was one of 36 built for Lehigh Valley in 1919. LV in 1920-22 sold 16 to Hocking Valley, which C&O absorbed in 1930. R. Compton



## OBITUARIES

Canadian author, photographer, and rail preservationist **James A. Brown** died on September 15 after a short illness. He was 82. A mechanical engineer who spent his career with CP, CN, and GO Transit, he was also a partner in Railfare Publications, a producer of books on Canadian subjects. He was also active in several rail-heritage organizations. Brown's first *TRAINS* article was in 1967. He had five articles in *CLASSIC TRAINS*.



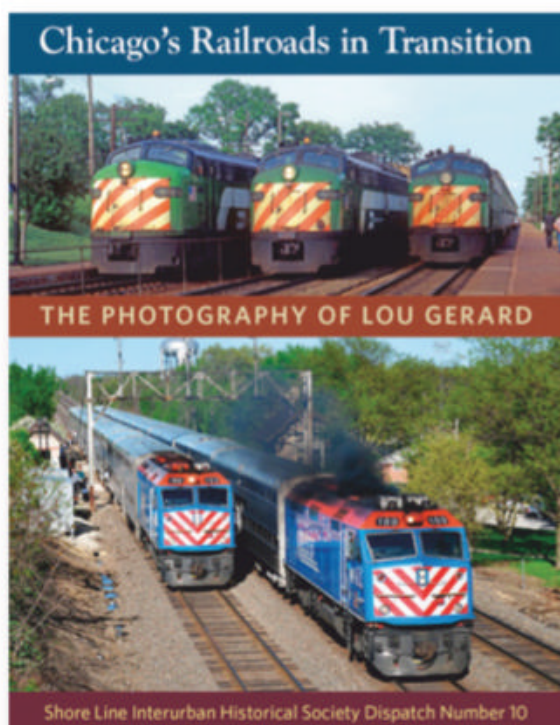
**Ben F. Anthony**, an engineer with General Electric's locomotive division, died August 4 at age 92. He worked for several railroads before joining GE in 1961, helping to put U25Bs, PRR E44 electrics, and UP gas turbines in service. After retiring in 1993, he was active in the Museum of Erie GE History. *TRAINS* profiled him in September 1999, and he had two articles in *CT*.



## CN Railiner, CP Dayliner

Budd RDCs of the two big Canadian railroads idle at Halifax Union Station in August 1972. CN "Railiner" 6100 is assigned to a 294-mile run to Sydney, Nova Scotia, while CP "Dayliner" 9059 is holding down a 217-mile Halifax-Yarmouth Dominion Atlantic schedule. Tom Nelligan

# Chicago's Railroads in Transition: The Photography of Lou Gerard



Front cover



Back cover

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**Surest C420 510 heads a passenger train at Coatzacoalcas, Mexico, in 1975.** Paul Hunnell

## Alco's outlier, exported

I enjoyed J. David Ingles' article on the C420 ["Alco's Outlier, page 36], and thought a note on the only exports (to Mexico) might be warranted: Ferrocarriles Unidos del Sureste Nos. 510–511. Sureste crews were always obliging to pose them for a portrait. No. 510 became Nacionales de México 5700, and 511 became NdeM 5701. — *Paul Hunnell, Naperville, Ill.*

### C420 speed test

When I was in train service for BC Rail in May 1995, two ex-Lehigh & Hudson River C420s, 631 and 632, were assigned at South Yard in Prince George, British Columbia.

When I worked the yard, we had the 631 and 632 as our usual power. Our work orders were to drill the C Yard, tear apart and build freights, and spot one customer south of town at Cale Creek: Carrier Lumber's Tabor Sawmill. It was just outside yard limits, so we needed clearance to operate to Cale Creek.

At that time, the overspeed alert on BC Rail's locomotives and RDCs was set at 64 mph, and the railroad used an alerter combined with an event recorder. However, the C420s had no such equipment.

One day I asked my engineer and yard helper how fast they thought the old girls could go. We cleared the south yard switch at Prince George and opened the throttle — so much for Rule 94 and being able to stop within half the range of vision!

In short order the light C420s were at 75 mph and still accelerating. We were going through grade crossings before the gates were even down!

There was nary a peep from the mechanical speedometer with its paper speed recorder, and no shriek of an overspeed whistle to be heard.

At 80 mph we chickened out and closed the throttle, pulling up to Carrier Lumber with a gentle halt. But I think they still had a lot of speed still left in them.

*Adrian Telizyn, Calgary, Alberta*

### New Jersey numbers game

Thanks for another rich and varied issue. One article that stands out as perfect, both photo and text, is Brian Solomon's "Jersey City Sunset," which celebrates his father's often-neglected photography. It gives an informed eulogy to the old Jersey Central commuter service, and even presents us a puzzle: How many semaphores can be seen in the photo?

*Fred Matthews, Oakland, Calif.*

### Springer the live steamer

I was pleasantly surprised to see the article on Fred Springer's short line photography ["A Passion for Small Railroads," page 64]. He was one of the kindest and most generous people I have ever known. He didn't seek fame or notoriety — many of his charitable acts were only known to the people directly involved.

Fred was an avid live steamer. I met him at the New Jersey Live Steamers in 1973. His first live steam locomotive was a 1-inch-scale 0-4-0 built by John Enders of Austin, Texas. Before he died, Fred gave that 0-4-0 back to the Enders family.

Fred bought the second live steamer I built, a 1½-inch-scale 4-6-0. To deliver it we made a grand circle trip — New Jersey to Illinois to Texas then back to New Jersey. On the last leg we stopped at several short lines, including the Reader.

I later built a 1½-inch-scale Consolidation for Fred, a model of D&RGW 951, a standard gauge C-41. One of the conditions was that it had to go around the 28-foot radius curve on his railroad.

Fred supported many rail preservation projects. He gave his book collection to the Railroad & Pioneer Museum in Temple, Texas. After he moved to New Mexico they named the park around the museum after him. He also was a major

### Texas' pearl of a railroad

The former Pearl Brewery did indeed close as a brewery in 2001, as noted in the article on Fred Springer. However, it has been redeveloped into San Antonio's enormously popular mixed-use destination known as The Pearl. It includes retail, dining, green space, a riverside amphitheater, and a campus of The Culinary Institute of America.

Texas Transportation Co. motor No. 2, pictured, is now on static display near the center of the development.

*James H. Barrow, San Antonio, Texas*

**Texas Transportation Co. No. 2 works the Pearl brewery in San Antonio in the mid-1990s.** James H. Barrow







**Photographer Fred Springer rides one of his live steamers, Rio Grande 951.** Marty Knox

contributor to the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec. He left his 4-6-0 and some of his large-scale cars to the group.

I am grateful for all the time I spent with Fred and am proud to say he was my friend.

*Marty Knox, Freeland, Mich.*

I enjoyed "A Passion For Small Railroads." Readers with an eye for "cabeese" might compare the Reader hack on page 70, with the A&NR caboose on page 66. The side door in one not withstanding, there are plenty of similarities to suggest they were both former Cotton Belt cars.

*Don Brown, Rochester, N.Y.*

## Mountain memories

Steve C. Bradley's "Mountain Brake-man" [page 54] gave a great sense of riding over the railroad with the train crew. In the early 1980s I tried to spend some time every summer in Yoho National Park, hiking the mountain trails, watching and photographing the CP Rail trains in and around Field, B.C. The article both brought back great memories and gave me some new information on the Mountain Subdivision.

I would like to offer one correction on page 59, however. The current Mountain Creek trestle, built in 1978, did not replace an old wooden structure. The original 1885 trestle was one of the largest wooden structures in the world, containing more than 2 million board feet of lumber. But it was replaced by a steel trestle whose construction began in 1899. Two photos of that process are on page 129 of Ralph Beaumont's book *Heckman's Canadian Pacific*. The current concrete-deck trestle replaced the 1899 steel trestle.

That minor detail aside, the article was great! The photos and map were also excellent. The photo of Bradley about to grab a train order is unique. Well done!

*Keith Boody, Three Hills, Alberta*



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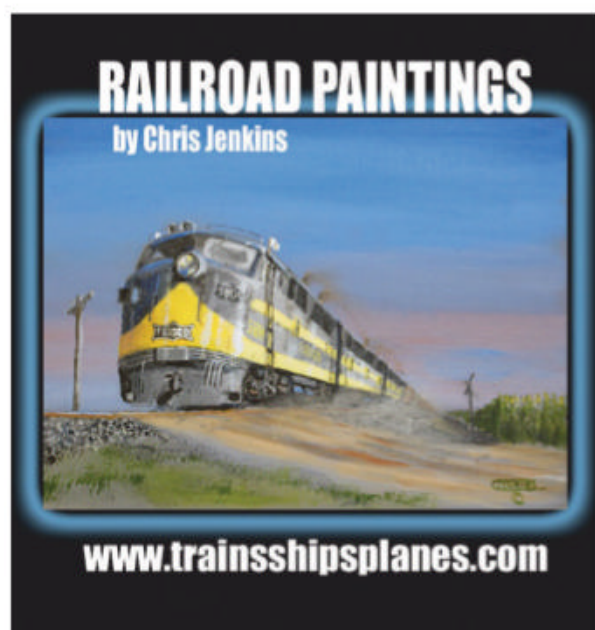
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## Fast Mail

No one can tell a story like someone who has been there and done what they are telling about. All the small details make me feel that I am riding in that cab, too. The way Bradley told the story from the very beginning of the day until the end had me almost looking at my watch to see how we were doing.

I rode through Rogers Pass on the *Canadian* in the 1970s and on the *Rocky Mountaineer* 20 years later. Even on a passenger train you can get a real feel for mountain railroading, especially if a crew member leaves a radio where you can hear what's going on. The beautiful scenery on that route is also an added bonus! Thank you, again, for a glimpse into Canadian railroading of nearly 40 years ago.

*Bill Jackson, Chilliwack, B.C.*

## Santa Fe blast-off

CLASSIC TRAINS once again outdoes itself! The Fall issue came yesterday, and I still keep going back to Mr. Patterson's photo across pages 12 and 13!

What treat for the senses it must've been to be there! Look at the smiles on the Santa Fe employees beside the PA, as well as the fellow sitting in the cab doorway! The sounds of roaring FDL16s bouncing off an idling PA would've been worth just hearing!

What a rush that must've been!

*Tim Souders, Andover, Kans.*

## Ohio electric encounters

I thoroughly enjoyed the Fall issue, particularly "Nightfall for Ohio Interurbans" [page 32]. I am an Ohio native and lifelong electric railway fan. My father Anthony Krisak, born in 1922, rode all three lines mentioned.

He rode the Lake Shore Electric frequently to Lorain, where my grandfather worked for U.S. Steel. Dad's weekly job was to pick up the paycheck (in cash) and bring it home to Cleveland on the interurban. He frequently hung out after school at the Eagle Avenue freight house in Cleveland where he would pump up the air on the freight motors and fire up the coal stoves to keep the crews warm — and hopefully score a ride later in the evening. He was on the last run on the LSE from Public Square in 1938. Realizing Dad was a budding railfan, a conductor friend of the family convinced my grandfather to let Dad ride the last car. The crowd on the car was so rowdy (alcohol was involved) that Dad was put off



**Ex-C&LE car 111 in Iowa in 1947 is reminiscent of photos in our Fall issue.** Anthony Krisak

at West 25th Street after the short ride across the Detroit-Superior Bridge, which soared high above the Cuyahoga River.

He also rode on the Cincinnati & Lake Erie in summers to visit a family friend's cabin on Indian Lake, and somehow managed to wander down to the Canton area to ride the Stark Electric before it closed.

Dad finally photographed both his favorite C&LE high-speed lightweights and Lake Shore big steel cars when he traveled to Iowa in 1947, including ex-C&LE car 111 on the Cedar Rapids & Iowa City [above]. Des Moines & Central Iowa acquired three Lake Shore steel cars in 1939 and rebuilt them as combines.

Keep up the good work. I look forward to seeing more traction articles.

*Rich Krisak, Chamblee, Ga.*

## Charlie's photo album

Many thanks to Fred Furminger for the article on the wonderful photographs of Charles Erler [page 46]. I was especially taken by the Coudersport & Port Allegany train at PRR's Port Allegany station. The combine that makes up the train still has its 15-foot Railway Post Office "apartment" at the rear. By the time of Charlie's 1940 photo, C&PA's RPO route was long gone. It was established on April 13, 1896, and lasted until August 26, 1917.

*The Rev. John G. Pearson, Raleigh, N.C.*

## Steaming for industry

I enjoyed the article about Koppers ["Steam's Last Stand in the Twin Cities," page 26]. I had a similar experience in the early 1970s at Northwestern Steel & Wire in Sterling, Ill. As a rookie truck driver picking up a load, I was shocked to see steam engines coming into the mill to switch cars out. It was great to see, but with the temperature below zero the condensation from the engines made visibility almost nil. It sure must have been tough on the crane operators.

*Marvin Shrager, Lewis Center, Ohio* 📧

**Got a comment?** Write us at Fast Mail, Classic Trains, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612; email: fastmail@classictrainsmag.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.





## “PENNSY’S FAMOUS K4s PACIFIC”

One of 425 identical passenger locomotives

*Forrest Pirovano’s image of a K4s shows a locomotive which had widespread fame.*

If a steam locomotive was at the front of a Pennsylvania passenger train, chances are it was a K4s. The first one was built in 1914 and they remained in service until the end of steam. The famous “Broadway Limited” and other blue-ribbon passenger trains had K4s power up front. As trains got heavier, they would be double headed for more power. Pennsy had a real winner with these 80” drivered locomotives. The one pictured here, 3750, is preserved in a museum in Pennsylvania. This beautiful limited-edition print of an original illustration, individually numbered and signed by the artist, captures the stance of this famous locomotive.

This exquisite print is bordered by a museum-quality white-on-white double mat, measuring 11x14 inches. Framed in either a black or white 1 ½ inch deep wood frame, this limited-edition print measures 12 ¼ X 15 ¼ inches and is priced at only \$149. Matted but unframed the price for this print is \$109. Prices include shipping and packaging.

Forrest Pirovano is an artist on Cape Cod. His illustrations of famous steam locomotives are a love he has had since childhood. This illustration was created from original photographs of this locomotive by the artist.

**FORREST PIROVANO, artist**

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# *Pere Marquette* passing Rougemere

About 5½ miles out of Detroit's Fort Street Station, Chesapeake & Ohio's afternoon *Pere Marquette* to Grand Rapids crosses to the westbound main at Eagle Avenue in Rougemere, Mich., in August 1964. E8 4004 is one of 31 such units on the C&O's roster. The three-unit set at the engine terminal is possibly for train No. 17-46, the *Sportsman* for Washington, D.C. The Interstate Commerce Commission approved C&O control of the *Pere Marquette*, the railroad for which the train is named, in 1928; C&O merged its Michigan subsidiary in 1947. Frank and Todd Novak collection





# “Silent Night” on the *Pelican*

Winston Link’s most famous sound recording featured an oft-overlooked train



As hymns ring out from a nearby church carillon, N&W’s eastbound *Pelican* brakes into Rural Retreat, Va., on December 24, 1957. O. Winston Link

**You might call it the ultimate railroad recording.** On a winter night in southwestern Virginia, a headlight breaks the horizon as a church lady down the street plays Christmas music on a carillon. Soon the carols are interrupted by approaching steam exhaust, clanking rods, four- and six-wheel trucks braking hard, only to come to a sudden stop in a cacophony of squeaks and groans. You hear vestibule traps drop, the barest suggestion of voices, then the thrilling chime of a steamboat whistle, followed by the stentorian acceleration of a Norfolk & Western J-class 4-8-4. The train is off again, its whistle fading in the distance as the carillon plays “Silent Night.”

The 11-minute 40-second recording was made on Christmas Eve 1957 at Rural Retreat, Va., by legendary photographer O. Winston Link, and became the signature track on *The Fading Giant*, one of a series of LPs Link produced in the early 1960s. If *Billboard* magazine had a chart for hit railroad records, this one would likely be No. 1. Thousands fell in love with this haunting episode — beautiful Christmas music and a regal 4-8-4. Joy to the world!

I often play the recording in anticipation of Christmas, but when I popped the earbuds in the other evening, I started thinking about another player in that Rural Retreat drama, the oft-forgotten train. It was N&W No. 42, the eastbound *Pelican*, a New Orleans–New York through train shared by the Southern Railway, N&W, and Pennsylvania Railroad.

I ask you, on a cold winter night in New York, what could be more appealing than to snuggle into a Pullman bound for warm New Orleans aboard a train named for the state bird of Louisiana?

The *Pelican* got the name in 1947, but in actuality it had been running in some form for decades, including a period when it was known as the *New York-New Orleans Vestibule Limited*. By the postwar era it was simply noted in the timetable as the impossible-to-remember “New York-Washington-Chattanooga-Birmingham-Meridian-Shreveport-New Orleans Train No. 41 or 42.” It was a New Orleans socialite who suggested a more lyrical name: the *Pelican*.

**Thousands fell in love with this haunting episode — beautiful Christmas music and a regal 4-8-4.**

The Southern reintroduced the train as a diesel-powered streamliner, although that applied only to SR’s portion of the route; on the N&W, between Lynchburg, Va., and Bristol, Tenn., it was assigned one of the latter’s steadfast 4-8-4s. Writer Ed King has fond memories of seeing one of the big Js being switched on or off the *Pelican*, as well as for the two other better-known trains along the route, the *Birmingham Special* and the *Tennessean*.

“The Js worked in cycles; the Norfolk–Cincinnati trains and the Southern trains,” Ed recalls. “Bristol would see every J in the course of a month except the one in the Roanoke shop for regular maintenance. There were three Southern trains every day each way using Js in and out. I was cab-happy — that made it easy for me to get in the cab of all 14 of them. Hostlers let me ride them around the shop area as they were being serviced.”

Even with its new name and new diesels (at least on Southern), the *Pelican* was no glamour train, despite imaginative ads featuring a caricature of the



train's namesake. As SR historian Bill Schafer explains, "The thing to remember about the *Pelican* is that it was a maid-of-all-work. All photos I have seen of it show it head-end heavy, so it transported a lot of mail and express. Unless you're someone like Link, its schedule at each end was unfriendly to photographers because it ran in the dark."

In the dark, indeed. In its postwar years, Nos. 41 and 42 left their respective departure points in mid-evening, with morning arrivals more than 36 hours later, a leisurely schedule for an approximately 1,300-mile run. Along the way were numerous changes of cars, including N&W's Birmingham–Roanoke diner, its services required only across the middle portion of the trip; a Shreveport sleeper via Illinois Central that came off and on at Meridian, Miss.; a separate New York–Knoxville sleeper; even a New York–Williamson (W.Va.) sleeper that switched at Roanoke. All that plus through coaches and sleepers and, probably most important, a full-length RPO and associated mail storage cars. The *Pelican* never stopped working.

The train also was notable for its college clientele. The route served a number of campus towns, among them the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Randolph-Macon in Lynchburg, Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Radford College in Radford, and King College in Bristol, Tenn. This made for crowded trains, something Schafer discovered over Christmas break 1967 when he rode from Washington to Abingdon, Va.

"I found a seat in a Southern heavy-weight coach near the middle of the



**Southern E units lead the westbound *Pelican* through Limestone, Tenn., in 1960.** Steve Patterson

train," Schafer recalls. "I was lucky. Forty-one was a non-reserved seat train, and when it stopped in Alexandria it filled to overflowing. Leaving town, it was SRO, with people crowding three to a pair of seats, sitting on suitcases in the aisles or chairs in the rest rooms, or just standing. It was a zoo.

"I slept most of the way to Roanoke, but west of there it was daylight and I wanted to take in as much of the scenery as I could. We had dropped a few cars during the night, but we were still a 15-car train and it was still very crowded. The N&W dining car had been inserted into the consist at Roanoke and I thought of going back and having breakfast, but the line was too long."

College students notwithstanding, the *Pelican* never stood a chance in the waning years of the privately operated passenger train, and in 1970 Southern combined 41 and 42 with the *Birmingham*

*Special*. After Amtrak arrived in 1971, varnish never came back to what's now known as the Interstate 81 corridor.

Maybe the *Pelican* was never a hot train, but so what? It's still worth remembering, if for no other reason than the role it played for Link's tape recorder that magical night in Rural Retreat. So, this holiday season, I'm going to listen once again to the lovely hymns on the carillon and thrill to the sounds of that 4-8-4. Most of all, though, I'm going to lift a glass of wassail to the late, great *Pelican*. 🍷



*KEVIN P. KEEFE joined the TRAINS staff in 1987, became editor in 1992, and retired in 2016 as Kalmbach Publishing Co.'s vice president, editorial. His weekly blog "Mileposts" is at ClassicTrainsMag.com.*

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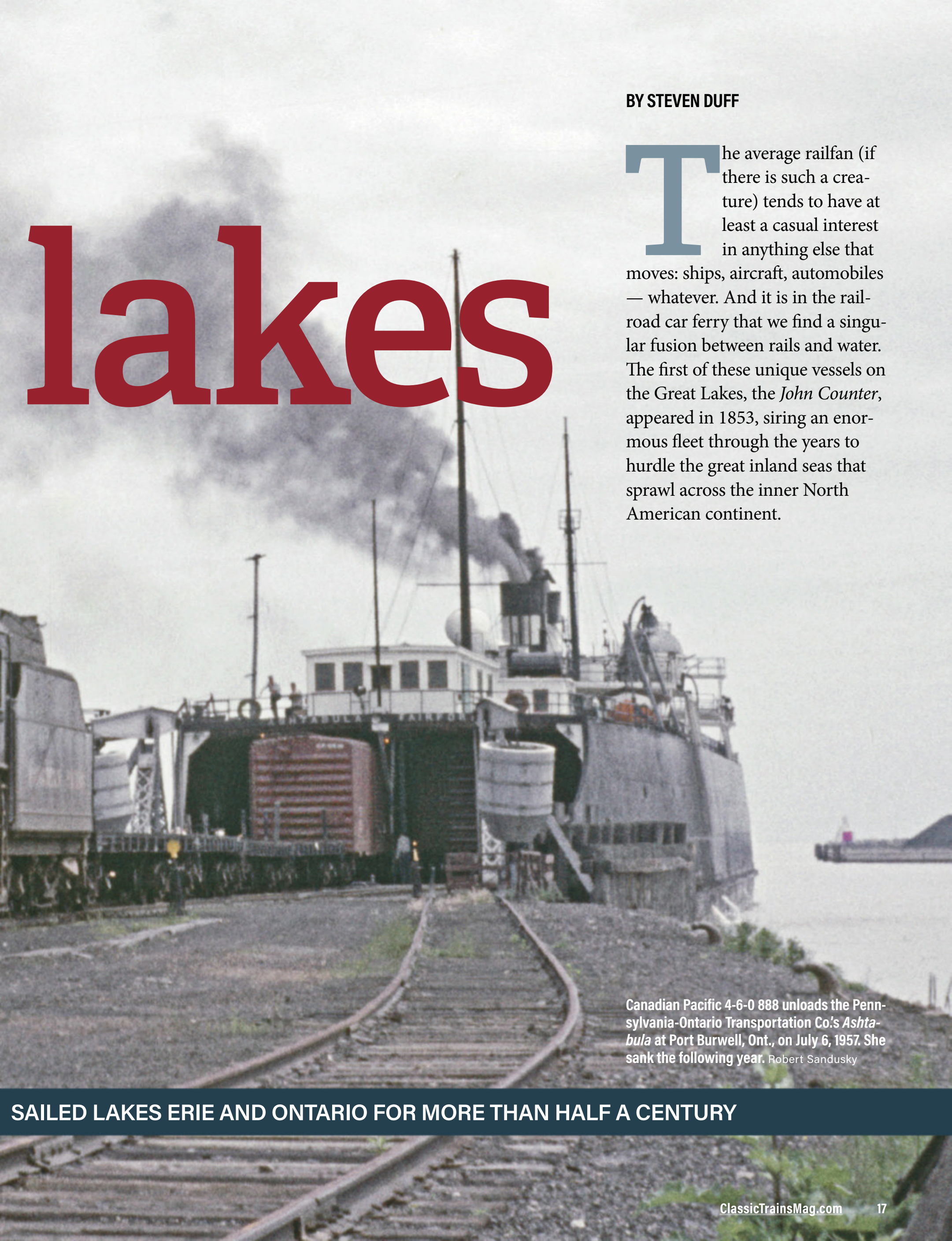


# Rails across the **1** lower



LESS FAMOUS THAN THEIR LAKE MICHIGAN COUSINS, RAILROAD CAR FERRIES





BY STEVEN DUFF

# lakes

**T**he average railfan (if there is such a creature) tends to have at least a casual interest in anything else that moves: ships, aircraft, automobiles — whatever. And it is in the railroad car ferry that we find a singular fusion between rails and water. The first of these unique vessels on the Great Lakes, the *John Counter*, appeared in 1853, siring an enormous fleet through the years to hurdle the great inland seas that sprawl across the inner North American continent.

Canadian Pacific 4-6-0 888 unloads the Pennsylvania-Ontario Transportation Co.'s *Ashtabula* at Port Burwell, Ont., on July 6, 1957. She sank the following year. Robert Sandusky

SAILED LAKES ERIE AND ONTARIO FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY



In 1896, the architect Louis Sullivan remarked that “form follows function,” a concept no more true than in the Great Lakes car ferry. Consider this: the average ferry carried around 30 cars (depending on size, weight, and configuration) on a single deck above the waterline, sheltered by an additional deck with a headroom of about 17 feet. Not only did this give the ship a potentially high center of gravity, but an enormous freeboard as well, making her hull like a sail. Only a deep draft relative to hull size would impart the necessary stability.

And then there was winter ice to contend with. Since the Great Lakes are fresh water, ice is always a seasonal menace, and the carferries had to be constructed accordingly, with under-cut bows that would ride up on the ice, which would then be broken by the ship’s weight, instead of attempting to cut through it.

By most standards of nautical aesthetics, carferries were neither pretty nor graceful. Because of the specialized nature of their cargo, they were built with completely flat decks and flat sides, giving them a boxy appearance, and yet they had tremendous character. And they were perfectly designed for the job they had to do.

The railroad car ferries on Lake Michigan have long been celebrated; in fact, one sterling example is still in service, the splendid S.S. *Badger*. The *Badger*, which

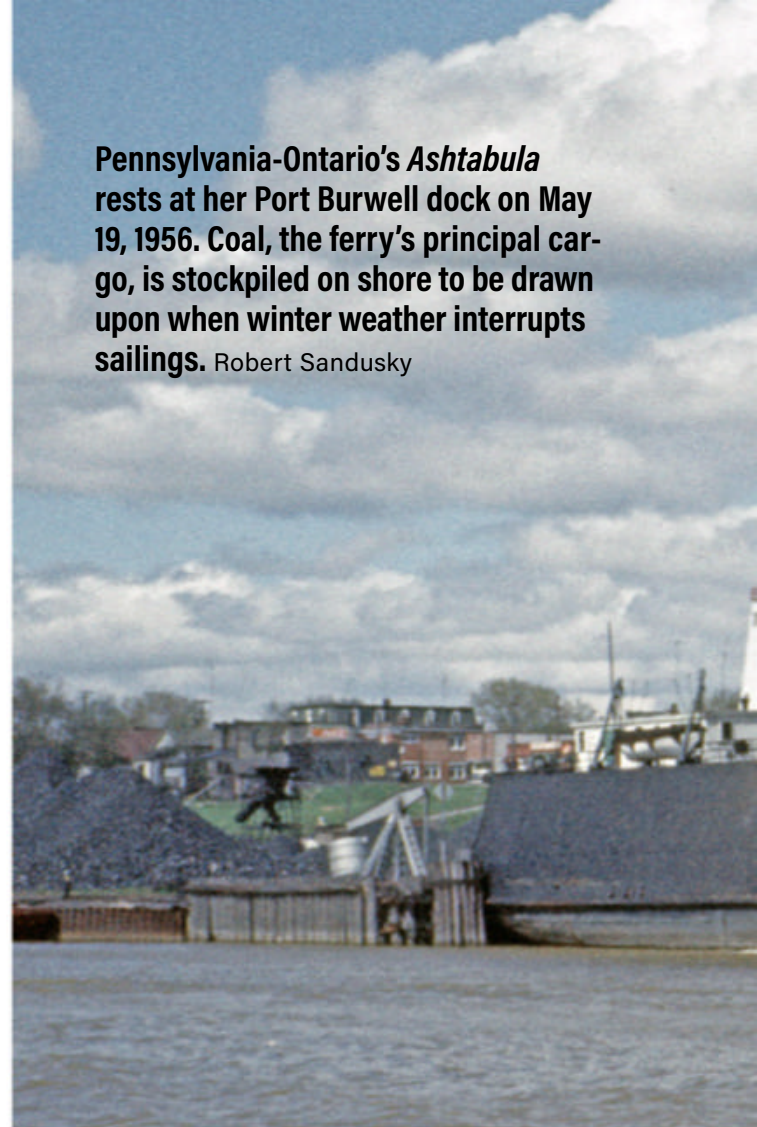
plies a Ludington, Mich.–Manitowoc, Wis., route between May and October, no longer carries railroad cars, but she is still in steam and is among the last coal-burners afloat.

Less known are the vessels that transported freight cars across Lakes Erie and Ontario. Carferry service on Lake Erie was primarily motivated for the purpose of shipping American coal to Ontario, mainly to serve the locomotive fuel requirements for the Pere Marquette Railway at Erieau, the Canadian Pacific at Port Burwell, the Grand Trunk at Port Dover, and the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo at Port Maitland. These services commenced operations in 1895 and lasted in some shape or form until 1958, when coal traffic declined because of the adoption of diesel power by the railroads.

### LAKE ERIE: ASHTABULA-PORT BURWELL

We will not go all the way back to 1895, as that time is away beyond the ken of even our most ancient readers. Rather, we will have an exploration of the two Lake Erie routes that some of us may remember: the Pennsylvania-Ontario Transportation Co. between Ashtabula, Ohio, and Port Burwell, Ont.; and the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Navigation Co. between Ashtabula and Port Maitland, Ont. The latter was handy to the steel mills at Hamilton (often called Can-

**Pennsylvania-Ontario’s *Ashtabula* rests at her Port Burwell dock on May 19, 1956. Coal, the ferry’s principal cargo, is stockpiled on shore to be drawn upon when winter weather interrupts sailings.** Robert Sandusky

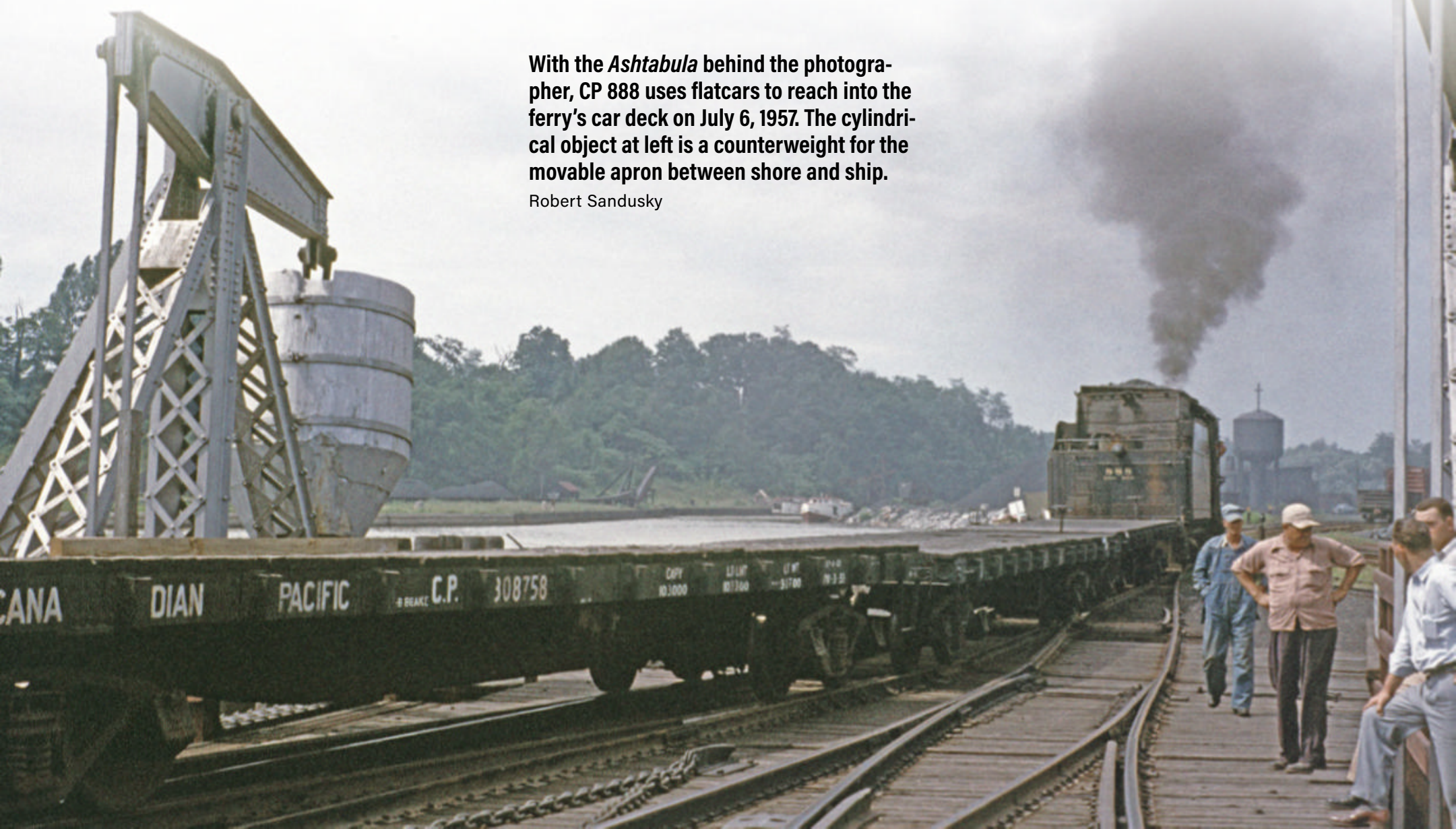


ada’s Pittsburgh), which is still a major coal customer, although the product is now delivered by lake freighter.

The Pennsylvania-Ontario enterprise was the brainchild of John W. Ellsworth, a major Ashtabula coal dealer, who recognized Lake Erie as a convenient short cut to the Canadian coal market. A map

**With the *Ashtabula* behind the photographer, CP 888 uses flatcars to reach into the ferry’s car deck on July 6, 1957. The cylindrical object at left is a counterweight for the movable apron between shore and ship.**

Robert Sandusky







would show Lake Erie as a major geographic impediment, but, thanks to the development of the car ferry, it was no longer so. With the participation of the Canadian Pacific and the Pennsylvania Railroad (which already owned waterfront property in Ashtabula), the new company ordered a suitable ship from the Great Lakes Engineering Co. of St. Clair, Mich., appropriately named *Ashtabula*. The *Ashtabula* was launched in 1906 and was to operate for an astonishing 52 years without change of route, name, or ownership.

The *Ashtabula* had a capacity of 30 loaded standard hopper cars and was able to make the crossing of Lake Erie in just under 4 hours. She had sufficient speed, in fact, to make two round trips a day between Ashtabula and Port Burwell, but traffic seldom warranted this.

Inevitably, southbound traffic was comprised mostly of empty hoppers, but there was also a modest traffic in paper and other forest products from northern Ontario bound for such destinations as Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

The great Depression spelled the termination of all the Lake Erie train ferry services except those of the Pennsylvania-Ontario and the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo. The survivors did benefit from the closure of the other operations and the *Ashtabula* continued to carry reasonable tonnage, although she spent a number of weekends in idleness in her berth at her namesake port.



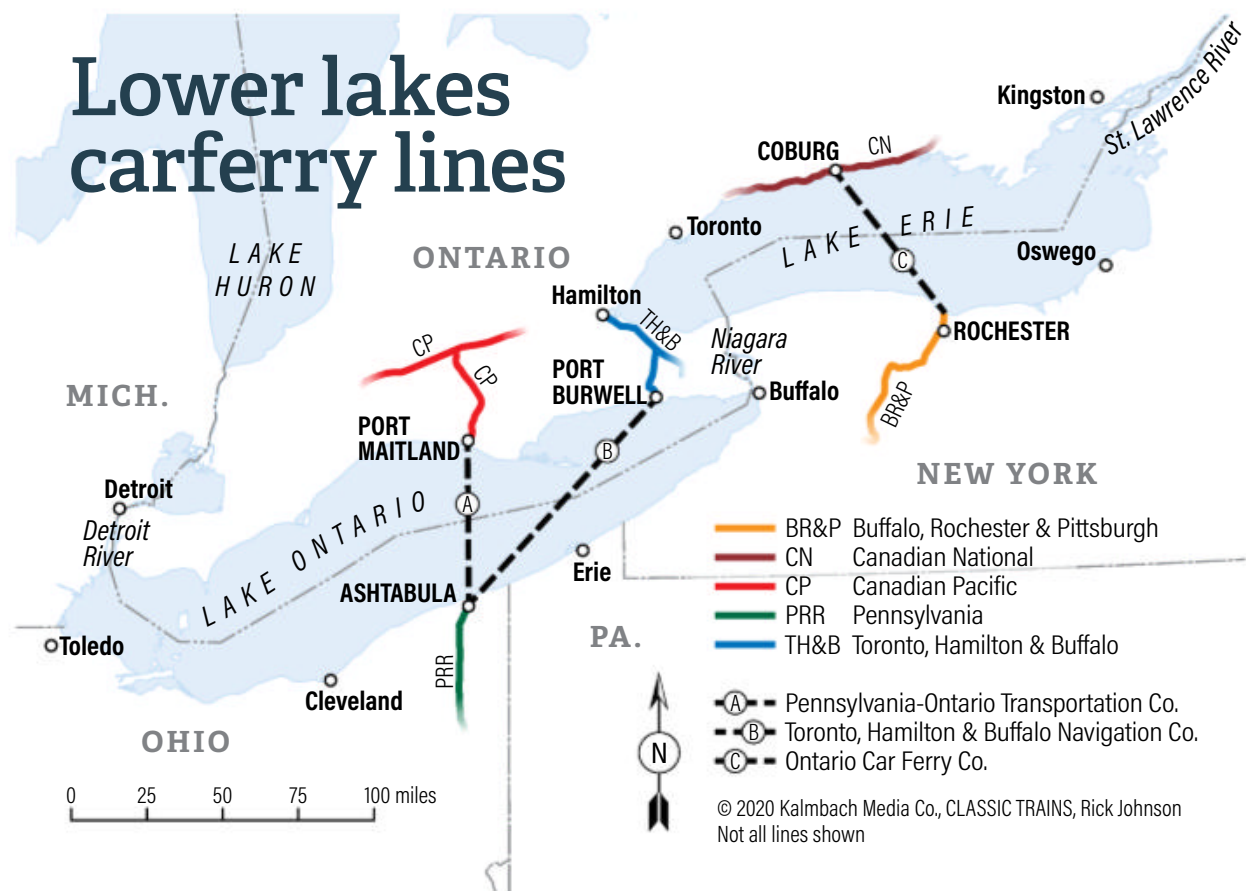
**The *Ashtabula*, longest-lived of the lower lakes car ferries, looks ready to depart Port Burwell on May 2, 1953. Two tragedies followed her end in 1958.** Ron Ritchie, James A. Brown collection



**Ten-Wheeler 839 switches in CP's Port Burwell ferry-dock yard in September 1955. Near the station, sister 892 prepares to depart with mixed train 659 to Toronto.** Robert Sandusky



# Lower lakes carferry lines



The *Ashtabula's* end came in September 1958, when she was in collision with the bulk freighter *Ben Moreell* at the approach to Ashtabula harbor. She sank in 27 feet of water, settling on the bottom with her superstructure and part of her hull above water. There were no casualties directly as a result of the accident, but, sadly, a marine surveyor fell to his death after the fact while examining the wreck to see if repairs were economically feasible and, the night before an inquiry, the skipper took his own life.

As to the *Ashtabula*, it was no surprise to anyone that the faithful old ship was not worth the cost of repair, and the Pennsylvania-Ontario Transportation Co. went out of existence.

## ASHTABULA-PORT MAITLAND

Another Lake Erie operation within the same time frame was the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Navigation Co., a subsidiary of the Canadian railway of the same name. The TH&B was an interesting line, a joint undertaking of the Canadian Pacific and the New York Central (today owned outright by the CP) that linked all three cities of its corporate identity, but also had a number of branch lines, including one to Port Maitland that afforded a direct route from Ohio to Hamilton, courtesy of the somewhat unimaginatively named *Maitland No. 1*. One oddity of these Great Lakes lines was the extensive use of numbers in ships' names. The TH&B ferry service was estab-

lished in 1916 by the NYC in order to expedite coal shipments to Hamilton; Canada was engaged in World War I and such was coal traffic for the Canadian steel industry that Buffalo's rail infrastructure was at the saturation point, and a relief route was plainly needed.

The original plan was to operate three vessels between Ashtabula and Port Maitland over the 90-mile route and the first, *Maitland No. 1*, was ordered from the Great Lakes Engineering Works at Ecorse, Mich. Interestingly, she was of the same dimensions as the *Ashtabula*, 338 feet in length, with a 56-foot beam and four tracks with a capacity of around 30 cars. Although the company was Canadian, the NYC's interest in it enabled the new

**Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway 2-8-0 102 pauses after loading the road's car ferry at Port Maitland. The TH&B Navigation Co. ceased operations in June 1932.** Three photos, Keith Sirman collection, courtesy James A. Brown







**Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Consolidation 102 switches the car ferry *Maitland No. 1* of the road's marine affiliate at Port Maitland, Ont.**

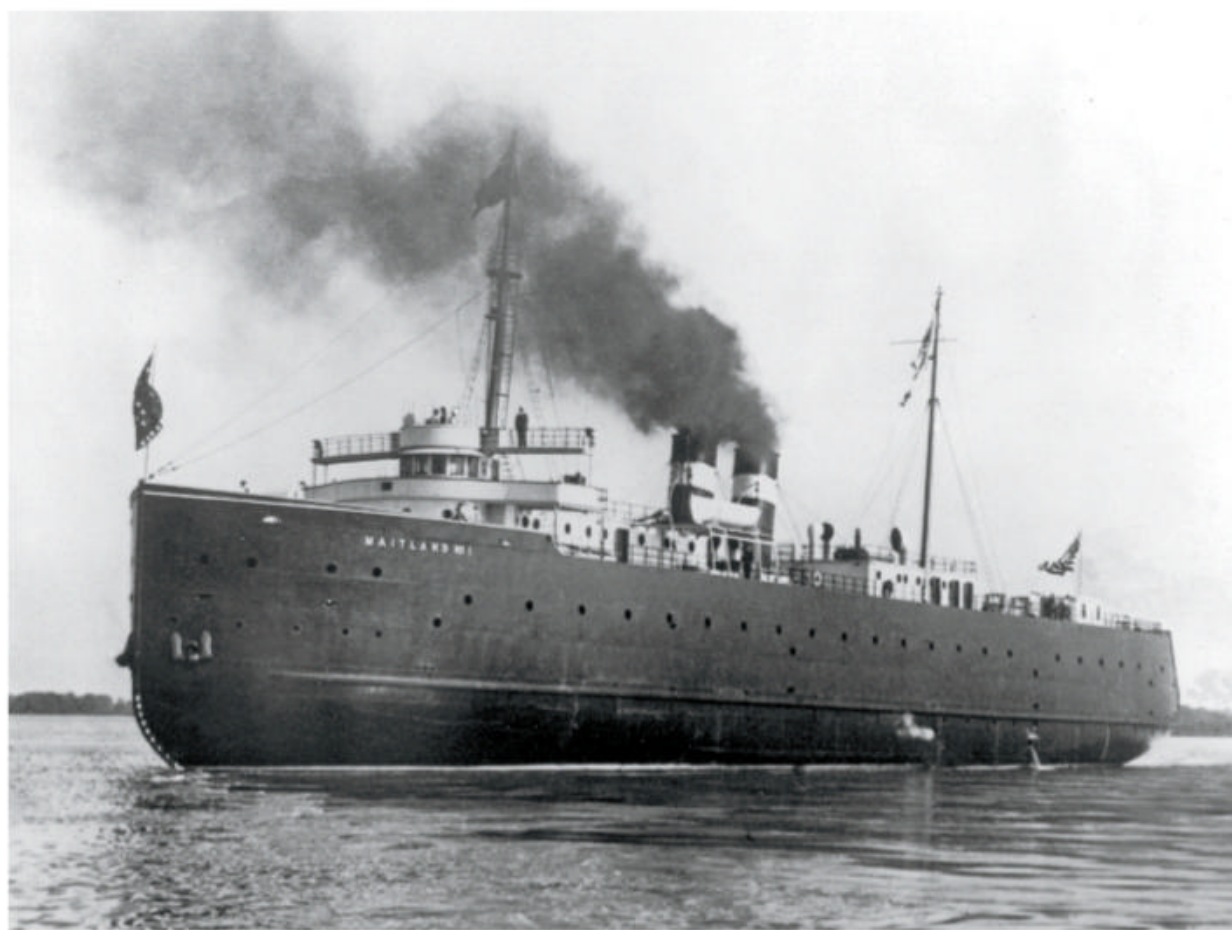
ship and her projected consorts to be built and registered in the United States.

Ultimately, she proved to be the “lone ranger” of the planned fleet. Sister *Maitland No. 2* was completed, but sold to the Ann Arbor Railroad to sail Lake Michigan as *Ann Arbor No. 6*, and *Maitland No. 3* was never built.

To access the new ferry route, the TH&B built a 3½-mile spur from Dunnville on its Hamilton-Buffalo main line to Port Maitland at the mouth of the Grand River, where *Maitland No. 1* called on her daily run from Ashtabula.

The TH&B Navigation Co. was not to have the longevity of the Pennsylvania-Ontario Transportation Co. In 1928, only 12 years after the service began, a considerable amount of its coal traffic was re-routed to Sodus Point, N.Y., and shipped in bulk by freighter to Hamilton. As if this were not enough, the new and expanded Welland Canal opened in 1932, enabling larger vessels to pass from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario with more massive bulk cargoes than trains and their ferries could handle.

Consequently *Maitland No. 1* ceased operating and went into lay-up at Ashtabula. The Great Depression must not be forgotten as an additional factor, and for a number of years the TH&B continued to advertise the service in the *Official Guide* in hopes that someday it might resume. It never did; in 1935, the ship was chartered to a company to carry automobiles between Milwaukee and Muskegon, Mich., and then was returned to her owners for



**Built in 1916 as the first of a planned fleet of three car ferries, *Maitland No. 1* would be TH&B Navigation's only vessel.** Keith Sirman collection, courtesy James A. Brown

further lay-up. The War Shipping Administration took her over in 1942, had her engines removed for use in another ship, and sold her for further service as a pulpwood barge. Thus the lifetime of TH&B Navigation overlaps that of our most senior readers by the thinnest of margins.

Operation of a railroad ferry had particular requirements. We mentioned the wintertime challenge of ice, but there was also the critical matter of loading and un-

loading. The ship had to be kept in trim, not only for safety, but so that the rails between ship and shore would remain in alignment. A locomotive on board could be a hazard due to smoke and the flammability of the wooden boarding ramp, so “idler” cars were coupled between the locomotive and the cars being loaded or unloaded and the movements made in a typical sequence of Tracks 1, 4, 2, and 3. Sometimes partial cuts were moved in



order to maintain trim, and in that connection, there was a three-color light — red, white, and green — at the ship's stern in view of the engineer making the movements. White meant that the vessel was level, red meant a list to port, and green meant one to starboard. So, as you can see, switching a car ferry required a finesse not needed in an ordinary yard.

One interesting touch at the inner end of the loading ramp was a semaphore operated by a ship's officer on command of the captain. This gave the locomotive engineer, who could not see the front of his cut, the signal to proceed or to stop.

### LAKE ONTARIO: ROCHESTER-COBOURG

On Lake Ontario, there was an almost complete parallel with the Lake Erie ferry lines: a cooperation between Canadian and U.S. railroads (in this case the Grand Trunk and the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh) with the purpose of moving American coal to Canada, in this case primarily to Montreal, at a saving of several days. The big difference, however, was the carriage of passengers as well as freight. Rochester, N.Y., was a large population center, and Ontario offered some of the finest vacation country anywhere, so what would be a more pleasant form of travel than on a steamship?

The majority of Great Lakes railroad

ferries had black hulls and funnels, a utilitarian finish to be certain, but one that imparted a gloomy and forbidding appearance. The ships of the Ontario Car Ferry Co., however, were painted white, and, even with their boxy lines, they looked like large yachts, certainly more inviting than their freight-only brethren elsewhere.

The company itself, although a partnership between the two railroads, was entirely Canadian-owned and their ships were the only car ferries to fly the Canadian flag.

Rochester as the southern terminal of the new service was a given, since it already had a fine harbor. As to the Ontario end, Cobourg was the best option, with a quite decent artificial port.

Between the initial agreement between the Grand Trunk and the BR&P in 1905 and the start of actual operation, two years were to elapse. Loading ramps had to be constructed, along with the necessary trackage to reach them, and, of course, there was a ship to be built.

The model for the new vessel, to be called *Ontario No. 1* (there's that number business again), was the *Ashtabula*, and the initial choice of builder was the firm that produced the earlier vessel, Great Lakes Engineering Works. However, the Welland Canal at the time was too narrow for a ship of that size to fit through,

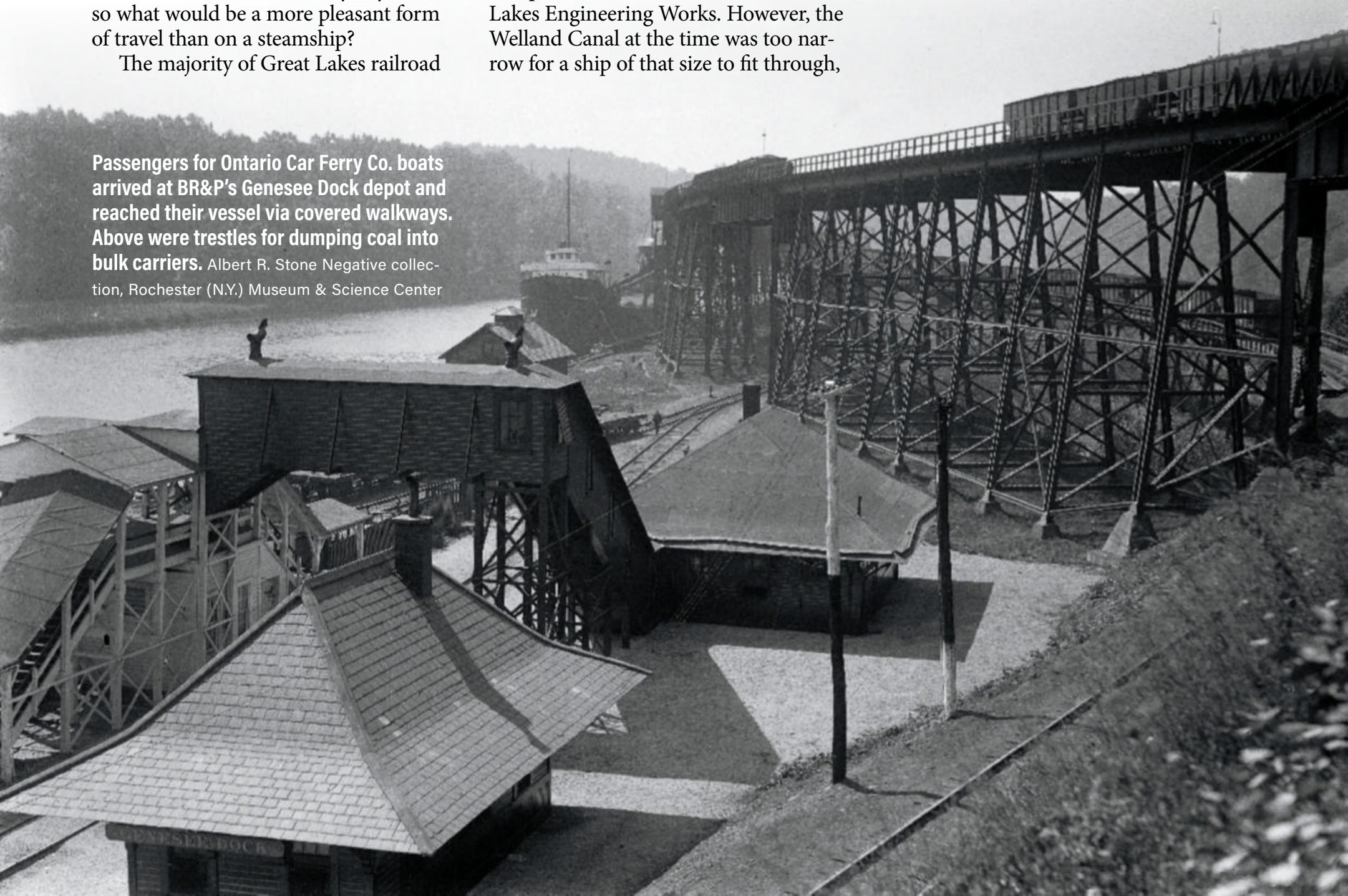
and so the order went to the Canadian Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. of Toronto, which launched her in 1907, and she made her first voyage from Cobourg to Rochester in November, a distance of 60 miles.

The passenger accommodations lay dormant for somewhat over a year, but then began to take passengers between Memorial Day and the end of September 1909. The timetable, with some variations over the years, was departure from Genesee Dock, near Rochester, at 9:15 a.m., arriving Cobourg at 2:15 p.m., departing Cobourg at 3:15 p.m., and arriving Rochester at 7:45 p.m. The southbound trip was faster than its northbound counterpart because the freight cars on board were empties, but for the occasional load of newsprint or feldspar (a type of pinkish rock found around Georgian Bay). So, the lighter the load, the faster the ship could go.

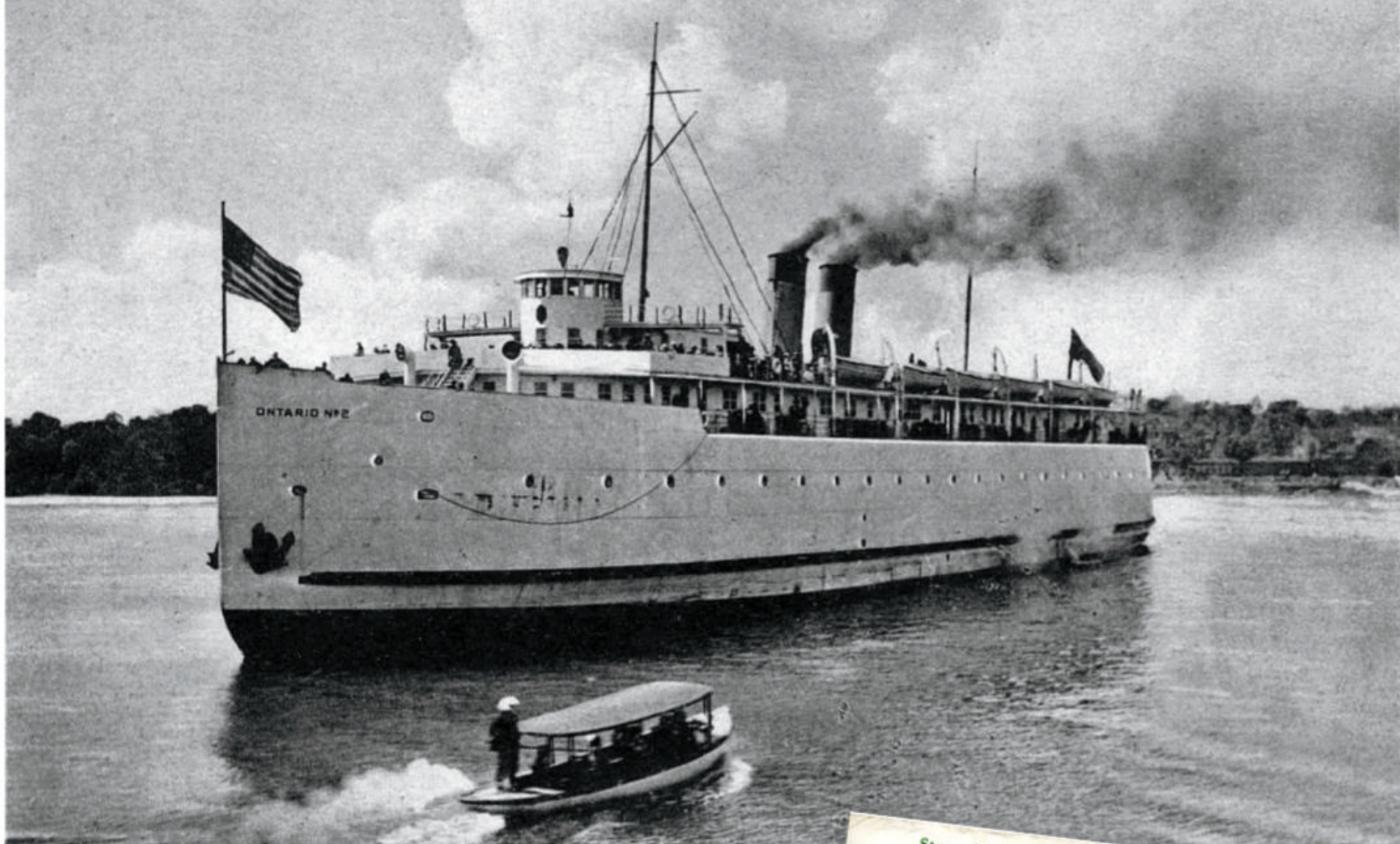
The Ontario Car Ferry Co. prospered to the extent that it found the need to order a second vessel, this time from the Polson Iron Works of Toronto. She appeared in October 1915, predictably named *Ontario No. 2*.

As a service to passenger clientele, the BR&P ran a boat train that left downtown

Passengers for Ontario Car Ferry Co. boats arrived at BR&P's Genesee Dock depot and reached their vessel via covered walkways. Above were trestles for dumping coal into bulk carriers. Albert R. Stone Negative collection, Rochester (N.Y.) Museum & Science Center







**Ontario No. 2** joined **Ontario No. 1** on the Rochester-Cobourg route in 1915. Ontario Car Ferry's two boats were unusual for having white hulls. Steven Duff collection

Rochester half an hour before sailing time in the morning and met the incoming boat in the evening. This approximately 6-mile run was the only boat-train service to connect with a Great Lakes car ferry and was a great success, lasting 33 years.

Passenger service was restricted to the period between late spring and early fall because in cold weather strict time-keeping was often an impossibility, especially at the mouth of the Genesee River, where ice jams frequently formed, creating lengthy delays.

Somewhere around 1925, the Ontario Car Ferry Co. introduced a form of piggy-back service. The automobile was becoming a factor in North American life, and there was a demand for auto accommodation on the ferries. But there was a problem: no road access to the slip at Genesee Dock, hence no capacity for driving vehicles aboard. The solution? Load autos onto flatcars in Rochester or Cobourg and shove them aboard with the rest of the freight cars.

The Great Depression had relatively little effect on the Ontario Car Ferry Co. The BR&P, however, had troubles and was taken under the umbrella of the Baltimore & Ohio in 1932. The B&O continued to operate the boat train, but withdrew it after the 1942 season as a wartime austerity measure. It was never restored.

After 1945, passenger traffic declined

precipitously, thanks to the availability of private autos. Coal traffic fared no better. A new source of coal for the Canadian National (which had absorbed the Grand Trunk in 1923) was Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, from where it could be shipped directly by rail. The Ontario Car Ferry Co. was faced with the crude realities of economics, but worse was to come. In September 1949, the passenger steamer *Noronic* burned in Toronto, one of the worst catastrophes in Canadian maritime history, resulting in stringent new fire safety regulations. The cost of necessary upgrades, particularly the elimination of wooden interiors, was prohibitive for the two ships, which were by now 42 and 34 years of age, respectively. So the Ontario Car Ferry Co. called it quits and its two vessels went to the scrap yard in 1951 and '52.


The lower lakes' railroad ferries are no more, and there is little visible evidence they ever existed. There may still be a few pilings and the odd trace of right-of-way, but this unique mode of transportation is now vanished forever. ■



**A 1943 brochure** shows that the Ontario Car Ferry Co. continued to carry passengers during World War II. James A. Brown collection

*STEVEN DUFF is a retired music teacher living near Parry Sound, Ont., with his cat Mabel. He keeps busy with writing, painting, sailing, and train-watching. Since 2002 he has contributed 11 articles, mostly on Canadian topics, to CLASSIC TRAINS. See the full 1943 Ontario Car Ferry brochure (above) on our website.*





# “Madam, this is not the smoking lounge”

A TRIP ON THE SOUTHERN'S *ASHEVILLE SPECIAL*

BECOMES PART OF A FAMILY'S LORE

BY ALEXANDER STOOPS JR. • Photos by Frank Clodfelter

Southern Railway train No. 4, the *Asheville Special* to Salisbury, N.C., takes a curve at milepost 117½ between Graphite and Old Fort sometime between 1971 and 1975.









The Asheville Special awaits departure time at the old Biltmore station in Asheville. The track at left is the line to Spartanburg, S.C., via Saluda.

**T**he summer before I began second grade, my grandfather announced that we would be taking the train from Asheville to Salisbury, N.C., on a day trip. We had moved to Asheville two years earlier to help my grandmother's sister with her dying father. After Great-granddad's death, my granddaddy did many things to cheer up Grandma, and I think also to reward me for the two years I had spent surrounded

taste of everything old and new.

There were four main lines out of town. To the southwest and west were the Murphy Branch and the route along the French Broad River to Knoxville, Tenn. On the east side of Asheville there was the line to Salisbury, N.C., and another to Spartanburg, S.C., via Saluda Mountain. The demands of each line were unique, so I saw everything from antique F3s (rebuilt to F7 rating) to large SDs, some spliced into the middle of trains with a remote-

the center of 200-car consists. The colors of all units were black and white ("imitation aluminum") separated by a neat golden band. Some carried the new SOUTHERN SERVES THE SOUTH heralds, while many of the older Fs and early GPs sported only the word SOUTHERN along their sides. All freights carried a bright-red bay-window caboose with yellow steps and handrails.

#### MORNING AT THE DEPOT

The day of our trip to Salisbury, I remember getting up at 5 a.m. and traveling with Granddaddy and Grandma from our house in the country to the Asheville depot that had been moved into the old Biltmore station after the bigger terminal had been razed. In the waiting room there were photographs and prints of Southern passenger trains with both steam locomotives and early diesels. Everything was clean, from the gold-leaf letters painted on the glass doors that read SOUTHERN RAILWAY to the wooden benches we sat on in the waiting room.

The structure was typical of the South, with a ticket office in the center of two waiting rooms made obsolete by desegregation. It was a brick building with a black roof that hung out over the walls that had been painted two shades of gray, the darker color used as a trim for windows and eaves. I spent many hours play-

**I remember the way it smelled out there.  
Oil-soaked ties, ballast, and diesel exhaust  
mixed with early-morning August dew.**

by elderly people who constantly reminded me that I must be quiet so as not to disturb Great-granddaddy.

During those two early-1970s years in my great-granddaddy's home, I spent a great deal of time with Granddaddy down by the Southern Railway yard in Asheville. Frustrated with our living arrangements (three families in my great-grandparents' house), he often came home from the office, ate dinner, and used my love of trains as an excuse to get out of the house. This was a great time for train-watching in Asheville on the Southern. The mix of power in the Blue Ridge Mountains was a

control radio car. The Murphy Branch with its tight curves, tunnels, and steep grades drew mostly F units and four-axle GPs. The relatively level route to Knoxville had a mix of everything on some of the longest freights I have ever witnessed.

To Salisbury, with the grades and tunnels just before Old Fort Mountain, sets of heavy SDs combined with Fs and GPs — and anything else the Southern was close to removing from service — labored at getting the freight to the Washington–Atlanta main line in Salisbury. Up from Spartanburg came the unit coal trains with remote-controlled units placed in



ing around the station on days that I went with my granddaddy to his office just down the street. I knew every crack in the crumbling platform. It stretched from behind the Biltmore Drug Store to the west and ran along the Spartanburg main line to where it ended behind my granddaddy's office about a city block away to the southeast.

By this time, Asheville had only one passenger train, the triweekly *Asheville Special* to Salisbury. Asheville wouldn't have had even this train had the Southern not decided to stay out of Amtrak in 1971. Because it didn't join, the road was obliged to run the *Special* and three other trains until at least January 1, 1975.

Just before the *Asheville Special* came into the station from the yard, Granddaddy called me out on the platform. I remember the way it smelled out there. Oil-soaked ties, ballast, and diesel exhaust mixed with early-morning August dew. From the yard tracks we saw the headlight, heard the pristine chime of the FP7's air horns, and the *Special* rolled into the station one track away from the platform. That was the line to Salisbury, which meant passengers had to walk across the Spartanburg mainline track to get to the train. Two asphalt crossings kept us out of the ballast.

The *Asheville Special* consisted of a single FP7 still in black and white but normally wearing a nose herald and always freshly washed. It was followed by the silver streamlined combine *Fort Mitchell*, a coach (a rebuilt heavyweight in Pullman green on this day, but often a stainless-steel lightweight), and a green dome car that had come from the Central of Georgia but had since been painted for SR. Passengers in Asheville headed for the dome car. Granddaddy found us a seat second from the front on the upper level.

Leaving the station at Biltmore there is a considerable grade. Granddaddy had told me stories from when he was a boy of how the steam trains would make the stop at Biltmore then back up and make a run at the grade. The FP7 sailed the three cars up the grade and continued to move swiftly on its way to Old Fort Mountain, the major obstacle between Asheville and Salisbury. Despite the stops at Swannanoa, Black Mountain, and Ridgecrest all being on an incline, the train continued on its way at a good clip.

At Ridgecrest the train made both a station stop and brake test before climbing and descending Old Fort Mountain. It was here that Granddaddy told me once again the story of how his father



FP7 6141 leads the *Special* east at milepost 115½, just west of Dendron, N.C., in January 1972. Southern added the ex-Wabash/Central of Georgia dome car to the train in mid-1971.



Train 4 exits Burgin Tunnel, one of seven bores in the 12 miles between Ridgecrest and Old Fort, in summer 1971. Photographer Frank Clodfelter was a regular engineer on Nos. 3 and 4.





Freight units and the *Asheville Special* rest beside the Washington-Atlanta main at the Salisbury depot on September 1, 1974. Curt Tillotson Jr.

had saved the life of a coworker in the tunnel near the station. Great-granddaddy had worked for Western Union as a line-man and traveled the Southern on a handcar repairing the telegraph lines. On one occasion the two men slammed into the tender of a parked locomotive in the tunnel. It destroyed the handcar and left both men lying on the track in the tunnel. Great-granddaddy pulled his coworker off the rails just before the engine backed down to its siding at the Ridgecrest depot.

It was during the climb over Old Fort

Black smoke came out of it and the roar of its prime mover was heard in the dome car. It looked noble and proud to be heading the *Asheville Special* as it passed five units on a long westbound freight.

I can only attempt to describe what it was like to pass a long freight on a curved incline on the side of a mountain when viewed from a dome car. The power rumbled past, then there were the tops of the freight cars. Watching the combined speeds of the passing trains was like traveling on a European high-speed train un-

to Salisbury. There were memorable bridges and fields along with many other stops in towns along the way. Even the Piedmont area of North Carolina was beautiful to view from a dome.

#### RELIC OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS

In Salisbury we had a layover as the *Asheville Special* made connections with the *Piedmont* from New York and Atlanta. We ate a wonderful meal in a hotel across the street from the depot. There was a theater nearby, so we saw a movie before returning to the train.

Before we departed, Granddaddy introduced me to the engineer, who gave me a tour of the cab of the FP7. The conductor took us through the combine and the rebuilt coach, both of which were new to me, as I had spent most of the trip east in the dome car. It was a perfect little train. Small and comfortable, with the best view of the Blue Ridge Mountains anyone could ask for was the best way to describe the *Asheville Special*. Like the remainder of the Southern's passenger trains in that era, the *Special* was a relic of the good old days of postwar railroading, riding the rails in its last days.

Another family story came from the configuration of the dome car. It was divided into four sections. At the rear was a section of about six double seats on each side of the aisle spaced evenly along the large picture windows. At the end of the

## It was a perfect little train.

**Small and comfortable with the best view of the Blue Ridge Mountains anyone could ask for was the best way to describe the *Asheville Special*.**

Mountain that the *Asheville Special*'s FP7 showed signs of stress. As it curved out and up around curves ahead of us, I saw the heavy exhaust from the spark arrestors, and there were tiny flashes beneath the wheels and then bursts of sand being dropped. Here in one of the most beautiful railroad settings in the world with curving grades above small farms, numerous tunnels in the sides of tree-covered mountains, and a horseshoe descent with a geyser in the middle, this 7-year-old boy kept his eyes on that locomotive.

til I glanced at the other side and saw that the *Asheville Special* was just crawling along, still on its way up the mountain.

Shortly after the freight had passed, and near where the tracks leveled off before descending, the train shook briefly. This was followed by a moment of rumbling before the smooth swaying motion returned. The conductor and trainman ran to the back vestibule, where they viewed what we later learned was a split rail. We made the stop at Old Fort, then traveled along a relatively level route on



aisle was the stairway up to the dome level, which had 8 or 10 seats on each side of the aisle. At the bottom of the stairs going up to the dome were a couple of steps that led down around the center of the car to the left. The ladies' and men's restrooms were located there directly beneath the dome level. The ladies' room had a solid door; the men's room on the other hand had a cloth drape that was pulled to one side and exposed the men's sitting room for most of the trip. The toilet was in a small room in the rear with its own solid door. Two steps up at the end of the side corridor brought one to another section of coach seating.

It was the cloth-draped door that was the catalyst for one of our great family stories. Grandmother was an avid smoker. She also hated heights, so while Granddaddy and I sat up in the dome enjoying the railroad action and scenery, Grandma was looking for a place to smoke somewhere below. She found it in the men's rest room.

All during our trip to Salisbury, Grandma disappeared from the dome and took her seat in the men's lounge area to smoke. As there were few passengers on board between Asheville and Salisbury that morning, this did not cause much of a problem. However, the greater number of people on the westbound trip out of Salisbury brought the matter to the conductor's attention. I just happened to be in the rest room when the conductor came to the door. "Madam!" he announced indignantly, "are you aware that this is the men's rest room!"

"What?" Grandma replied in her slow drawl, "I thought this was the smoking lounge."

"Madam, this is *not* the smoking lounge!" The conductor pulled the curtain open then twisted it around so that she could read the words MEN'S REST ROOM printed in white letters. "The smoking lounge is two cars ahead."

Grandmother's argument that the drape being pulled aside had caused her confusion fell on deaf ears. I still think the conductor thought she was just a dirty old lady. By the time they had completed their debate, a group of passengers had gathered in the corridor to witness my grandmother's beet-red face. Making things worse was that our minister boarded the train later in Black Mountain, and Grandma had been brought to his attention by one of the other passengers, who told him about the little old lady in the men's room. Sworn to secrecy by Grandma, I did not tell the story to



**The eastbound Asheville Special crosses "High Fill" as it descends the Blue Ridge by means of the famous Old Fort Loops. It will soon be on the track visible to the left of the second car.**

my Grandfather until after my Grandmother had done so the next day.

"I thought that conductor was looking at me awfully funny every time he walked past me on the trip home," was his only comment, followed with a joyful laugh thereafter each and every time this story was repeated.

### LAST RUN, AND A REVIVAL

When it was announced that the Asheville Special would be eliminated, its consist swelled to as many as two F units, four coaches, and two domes during the last weeks. The final run, with specially assigned E8s from the Southern Crescent pool, came on August 8, 1975.

The next day, the Southern launched the Skyland Special, an excursion train that made Asheville–Old Fort round trips

on summer weekends. Reviving an old Asheville–Florida train name, the Skyland Special featured lengthy consists that included two domes, powered by a pair of FP7s, by then painted in the classic green-and-gold livery. We had moved on to Florida by this point, but each year we returned for visits, and the trip always included a ride on the Southern. Imagine two FP7s climbing the Old Fort grades as seen from a dome almost 12 cars behind the power. Those two locomotives didn't seem to struggle as hard as that single unit did a few years earlier.

When we made our summer excursions in those later years during our trips up from Florida, Grandma stayed back at the family home with her sisters. I am sure my memories of the Southern Railway are better ones than hers were. ■



# Disappearing Delta



On September 28, 1978, the final revenue run to Hood passes through "Old Sacramento," the Central Pacific's birthplace on the east bank of the Sacramento River.





# aring blues

RAILS RETREAT FROM THE  
LONELY FLATLANDS SOUTH  
OF SACRAMENTO

BY DAVE STANLEY • Photos by the author

**The story of railroading is the story of boom and bust.** When times are good, railroads expand to reach new customers and keep up with competitors. Over time, those customers come and go, often leaving no business case for keeping a marginal line intact. Thus, the rails go rusty and eventually go away entirely.

Such was the case in Northern California's Sacramento River Delta, which saw new railroads built in the first part of the 20th century and their decline and partial removal in its second half. On one side of the river, a short line still couldn't make it work, while tracks on the other side endure as a popular tourist destination.



## SP EXTENDS ITS REACH

Sacramento earned its place in rail history in 1863, when the Central Pacific began construction there of the western portion of the first transcontinental railroad. In December 1905 laborers broke ground for another rail line in California's capital city. Conceived on the Sacramento River waterfront a few blocks away from the CP's birthplace, the upstart Sacramento Southern Railroad was anxious to tap the heart of the fertile San Joaquin-Sacramento delta region. Building south through the farming communities of Freeport and Hood, the Sacramento Southern had its sights set on Walnut Grove, 24.6 miles south of Sacramento, in a land heretofore dependent on riverboats for heavy transportation.

Unsettled land rights and legal issues delayed further construction of the railroad until 1907, but that didn't discourage the Southern Pacific from financially backing the young endeavor and making its own plans for the new route. SP envisioned a railroad with arteries to Antioch and Woodbridge diverging at Walnut Grove, thereby creating new links to the Bay Area and San Joaquin Valley.

Track gangs finished the line to Walnut Grove on March 17, 1912. Subsequently, the Sacramento Southern name disappeared in 1916 as the organization was folded into the Southern Pacific.

Further expansion in 1929 would take the Walnut Grove Branch to its zenith with the addition of about 8 miles of track to the settlement of Isleton. A 3-mile extension to an asparagus cannery beside the Mokelumne River southeast of Isleton followed in 1931, operating until 1951.

Improvements elsewhere to SP's California Pacific main line across the Suisun marsh and the 1930 completion of a massive bridge spanning the Carquinez Strait between Benicia and Martinez scuttled any further extensions for the branch.

While merchandise and oil were hauled to freighthouses and distributors along the line, it was agriculture that financially fed the Walnut Grove Branch from its first day of operations right up to the final curtain call. A variety of produce grown in the rich delta peat soil now had a new route to market. This business, however, didn't escape the attention of competitor Western Pacific, which was financing a parallel line to the west of the Sacramento River.

## ENTER THE FEATHER

Built by the San Francisco-Sacramento Short Line (successor to the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railway) and operated by WP subsidiary Sacramento Northern Railway, the electrified Holland Branch opened for business in June 1929, stretching 15.8 miles from SN's

main line connection at Riverview, southwest of Sacramento, through the Holland farming district to Westfield, later renamed Oxford.

Unlike SP's Walnut Grove line, which offered passenger service until 1932, initially with McKen cars and mixed train service in later years, SN's Holland Branch was a freight-only operation. A projected extension to the town of Ryde was never realized and the line survived by serving produce packing sheds at seven locations and a large beet sugar refinery located in Clarksburg, 6 miles south of Riverview.

Owned by Amalgamated Sugar, the factory initially began production in the company town of Amalga, Utah, in 1916. Shut down in 1929 because of a sugar beet blight in the Cache Valley north of Ogden, the plant was permanently closed in 1933, dismantled, and shipped west in pieces by rail. Reassembled at Clarksburg, the plant reopened July 31, 1935. Interestingly, the Amalgamated facility had the distinction of being located on two interurbans 700 miles apart through nine decades of sugar production: the Utah Idaho Central in Utah and Sacramento Northern in California.

Amalgamated sold its refinery to American Crystal Sugar in 1936, which in turn offered the facility to Delta Sugar in 1982. Few, if any, raw beet deliveries came by rail, as the close proximity of sugar acreage to Clarksburg made trucking the preferred mode of transportation. Beets destined for other refineries in Northern California, however, traveled over SN rails into the 1960s.

An early 20th century practice for western railroads was to build their own produce sheds to accommodate shipments from growers not located trackside. Sacramento Northern erected four packing sheds on the line, one each at Greendale and Sorroca, and two at Oxford. The railroad even designed its own crate label featuring an artist's depiction of an SN interurban beneath the proclamation "ELECTRIC Sacramento River Bartletts." In addition to pears, asparagus and onions were principal crops harvested along and handled over the branch. Prior to 1950, average annual carloadings from these three stations alone totaled 1,030. Additional seasonal traffic waybilled from private sheds at Valdez, Silverdale, and Central raised the yearly total from that era by another 300 cars.

Valdez was also home to an automatic electric substation delivering 1,500 volts D.C. to the branch. Overhead wire carried the current until dieselization supplanted freight motors on the route in 1953.

## DECLINE

By the 1970s, general freight traffic and perishable shipments on both SN and SP branches were dwindling, much of it lost to trucks.





Led by SP GP9 5746, empty beet racks roll across Tyler Island, south of Walnut Grove, in July 1965, en route for loading at Isleton. Tom Irion, courtesy John Snyder, Stanley collection



One of the last trips into Walnut Grove saw GP9 3482 pulling two loads from the shed at Mofuba, just north of town, on August 7, 1975.



Called to gather stored cars on October 10, 1978, the crew poses for a farewell portrait at Freeport. Left to right are conductor Joe Morgan, brakeman John Koch, brakeman Manny Cereceres, and engineer Joe Petrocchi.



Trainloads of sugar beets, loaded at both Freeport and Isleton on the Walnut Grove Branch, had vanished as well. The crowning blow to that line was a disastrous 1972 levee break on Andrus Island that flooded Isleton, damaging much of the track in town. Rail service beyond the Georgiana Slough drawbridge, located north of Isleton, was terminated. Packing houses at Hood and Mofuba, located 2 miles north of Walnut Grove, continued to load produce during the late summer harvest. However, by mid-decade it became clear that the end was fast approaching for the branch.

In June 1975, SP filed an application with the Interstate Commerce Commission asking to abandon the line from Hood Junction to Isleton. Despite objections from Isleton shippers, who had been without rail service since the '72 flood, the ICC approved the application. The dormancy of the south end of the line was best illustrated by the arrival of long strings of derelict boxcars parked on the branch main and on every available spur between Hood Junction and Georgiana Slough. In 1976, SP would again be knocking on the ICC's door.

Sacramento Northern's produce business on the Holland Branch departed for good in late summer 1972 with the last carloads of onions were shipped from the shed at Greendale, 4.6 miles south of Clarksburg. Trains had not ventured beyond Greendale since the 1960s, leaving the once-busy produce-driven line to rust away. In 1985, new owner Union Pacific abandoned and scrapped out the south end of the branch, between Clarksburg and Oxford. Delta Sugar, however, continued to generate revenue for UP. Molasses, beet pulp, and bags of White Satin brand sugar continued to be shipped from Clarksburg. Inbound loads of coke were brought to the refinery to fire a kiln, burning limestone to produce lime powder. Combined with water, the powder created milk of lime, which was used in conjunction with carbon dioxide gas to purify the raw juice from sliced sugar beets.

In 1991, Yolo Shortline Railroad assumed operation of the Holland Branch, with UP making its last run to Clarksburg that January 25. Sadly, Delta Sugar shuttered the plant two years later and the branch lost its final customer. YSL ran occasional passenger excursions, including at least one trip behind restored SP 0-6-0 1233, but deteriorating track conditions soon put an end to the fun. Operation of the Holland Branch quietly passed into history in 2000 with the removal of the last cars stored on the line, and the rails came up in 2003 after sale to the city of West Sacramento for trail use. The beet refinery was renovated and thrives today as the Old Sugar Mill, home to 15 wineries and an event center.

On the Sacramento side of the river, South-



ern Pacific soldiered on into the 1970s, with late-summer Hood Turns supplying empty Pacific Fruit Express reefers to Stillwater Orchards for pear shipments to eastern Canada. Alas, seasonal car loadings hardly warranted continued operation of the 16 remaining miles of the Walnut Grove Branch. In July 1976, SP petitioned the ICC for abandonment of the line south of Sacramento, which came in September '78. Sadly, Stillwater immediately turned to trucks to move its produce to market. Aside from this, the only other customer affected was a water filtration plant that received year-round shipments of chlorine at Del Rio in south Sacramento. Plans to relocate this facility to a larger complex across town on WP's main line near Laguna Creek were already afoot and in 1978 the operation moved.

#### A PERSONAL CONNECTION

As a youngster growing up in Sacramento, the William Land Park Zoo was one of my favorite haunts, and, fortunately for me, my mother's too. She enjoyed watching the animals and I enjoyed watching the SP Walnut Grove local whisk past the zoo's western



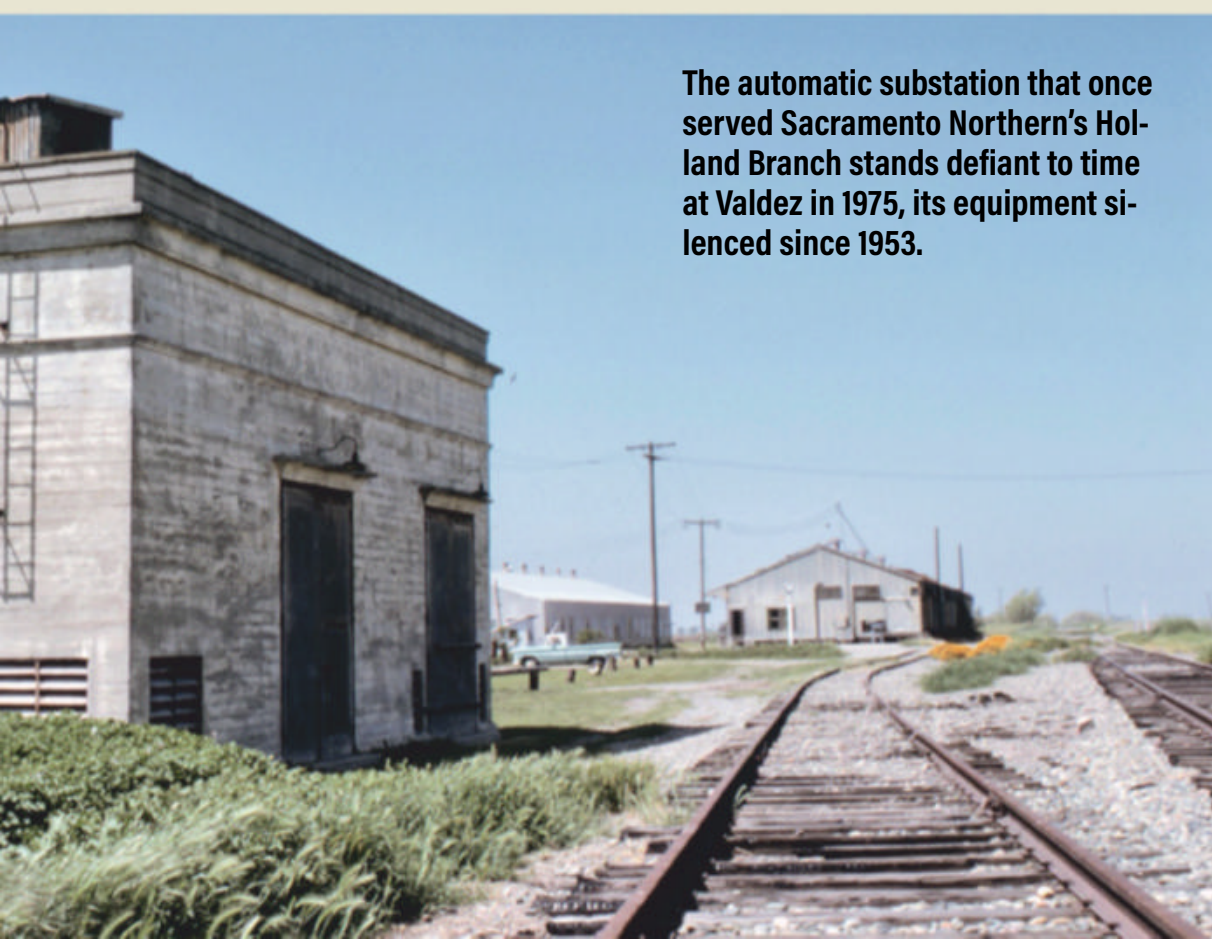




Above: The five ice reefers on this Western Pacific local approaching Willow Point in August 1972 were a hint that this train was going deep into the delta.



Left: Borrowed from WP subsidiary Tidewater Southern, RS1 746 pulls two molasses loads from American Crystal Sugar in Clarksburg in September 1973. The well-traveled Alco became Central California Traction 80.



The automatic substation that once served Sacramento Northern's Holland Branch stands defiant to time at Valdez in 1975, its equipment silenced since 1953.



A Sacramento Northern-inspired packing crate label depicted a passenger train, even though SN's fruit-shipping Holland Branch was freight-only.



boundary. Of course, time marches on and with it, beginnings and endings. For me, 1974 was the beginning of a 41-year railroad career.

For the Walnut Grove Branch, 1978 marked the end of 66 years of service along the east bank of the Sacramento River. Southern Pacific hauled the final revenue loads from Hood on September 28 of that year, and a subsequent trip down the river to fetch the last of the stored boxcars ran a few days later, closing the book on the Sacramento Southern on October 10, 1978. Or so it seemed.

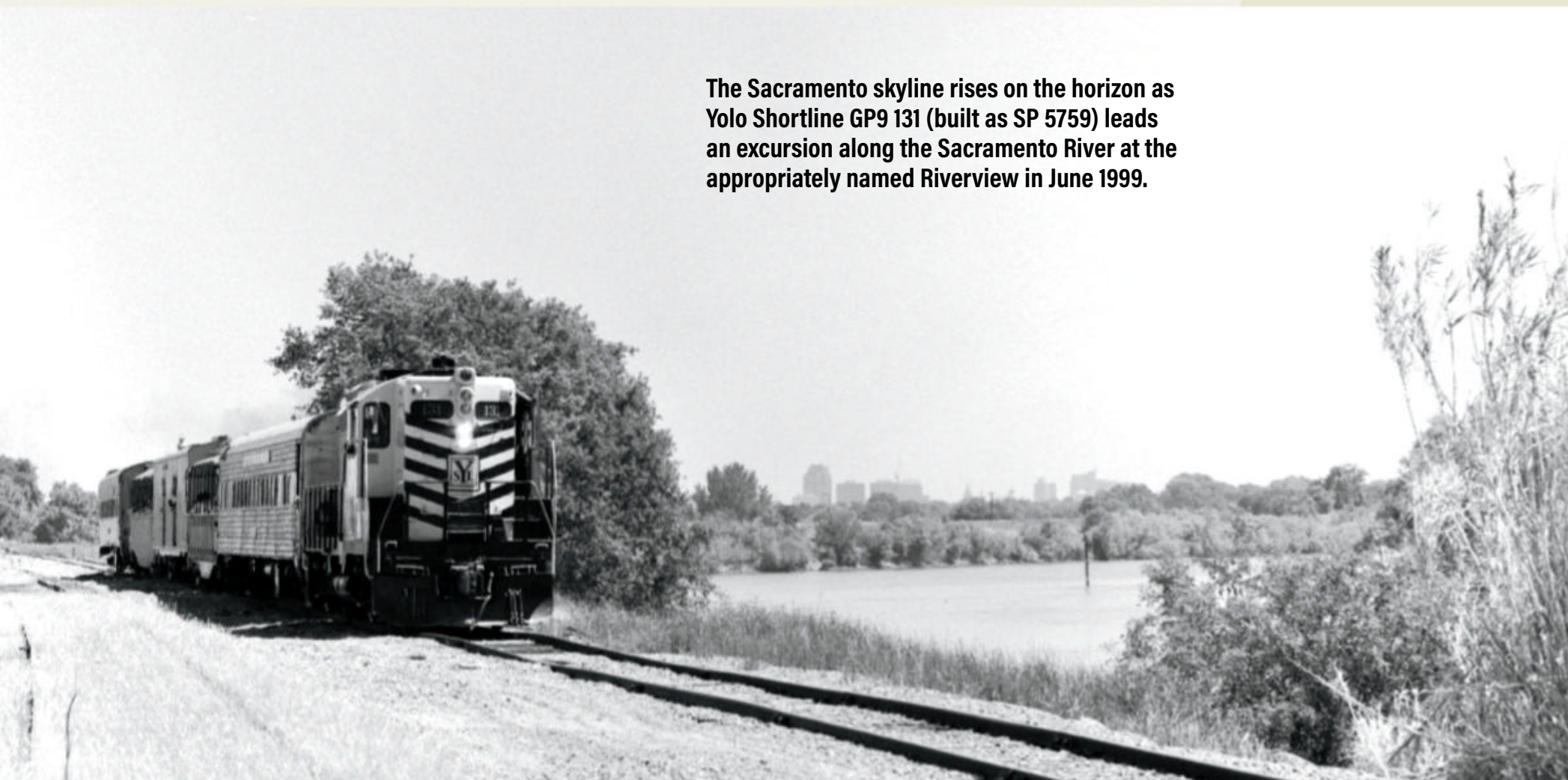
With the 1981 opening of the California State Railroad Museum in Old Town Sacramento, many eyes were cast upon the orphaned Walnut Grove Branch as a possible excursion railroad. The state acquired portions of the line, inoperative but still relatively intact to Hood Junction, and until 2015 operated freight service on behalf of SP successor Union Pacific. Today, the museum operates excursion trains from Old Town 3 miles south to Baths station.

And the name of that new railroad? Why, the Sacramento Southern, of course! 🚂

*DAVE STANLEY, a co-author of books featuring two of his employers, Central California Traction Co. and Western Pacific, retired in October 2015. An avid model railroader, he lives with his wife Shirley in Morada, Calif. This is his first CLASSIC TRAINS byline. He thanks Ted Benson, Kevin Hecteman, Tom Irion, Peter Norgaard, Pete Panos, and John Snyder for their help with this story.*



**The Sacramento skyline rises on the horizon as Yolo Shortline GP9 131 (built as SP 5759) leads an excursion along the Sacramento River at the appropriately named Riverview in June 1999.**

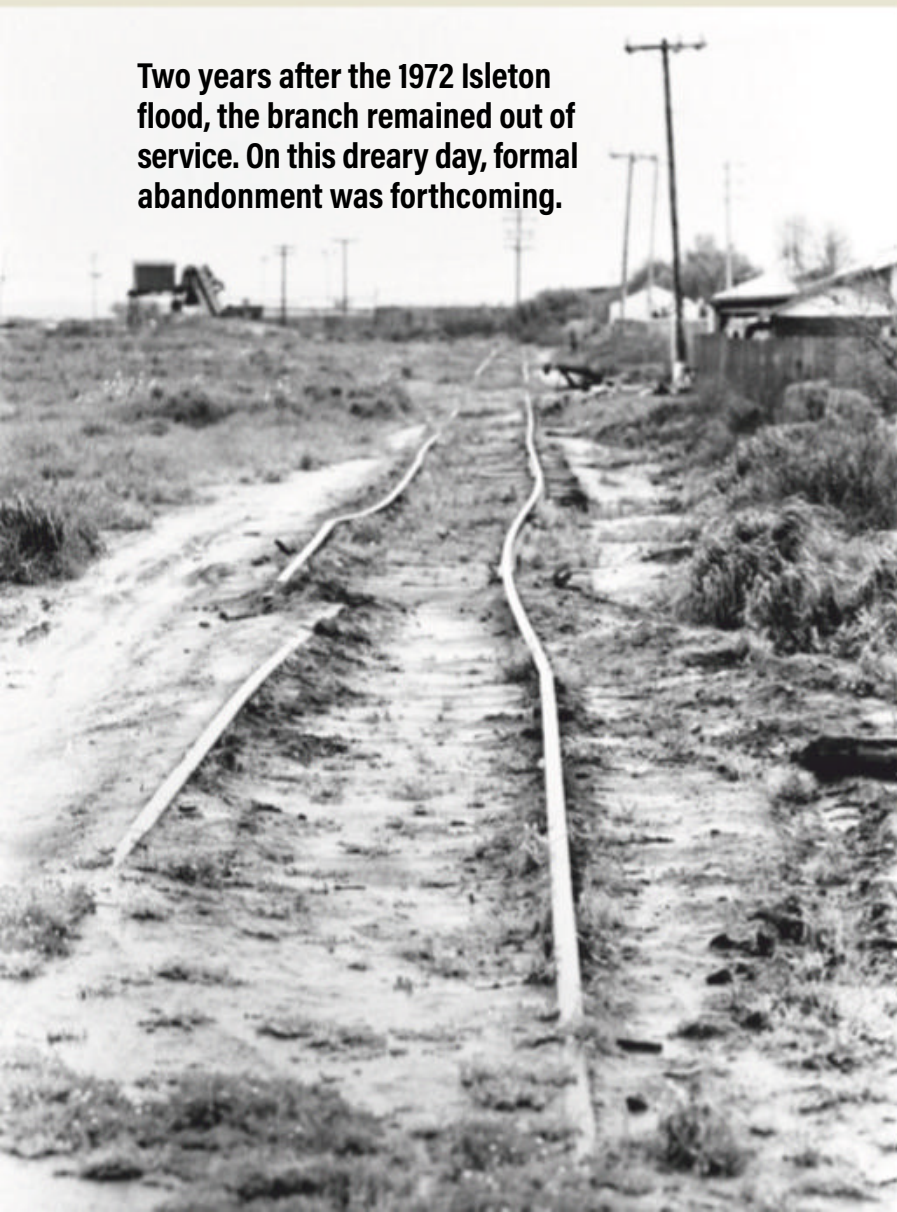




As a local grower harvests his crop, UP SW1500 1317, following a track inspector in a hi-rail truck, rambles north from Clarksburg for the final time on January 25, 1991.



Two years after the 1972 Isleton flood, the branch remained out of service. On this dreary day, formal abandonment was forthcoming.



Sacramento's water filtration plant at Del Rio was the landing spot for inbound tank cars of chlorine. Operations here were on life support by the time of this July 1978 photo, and the facility would soon relocate onto the WP.

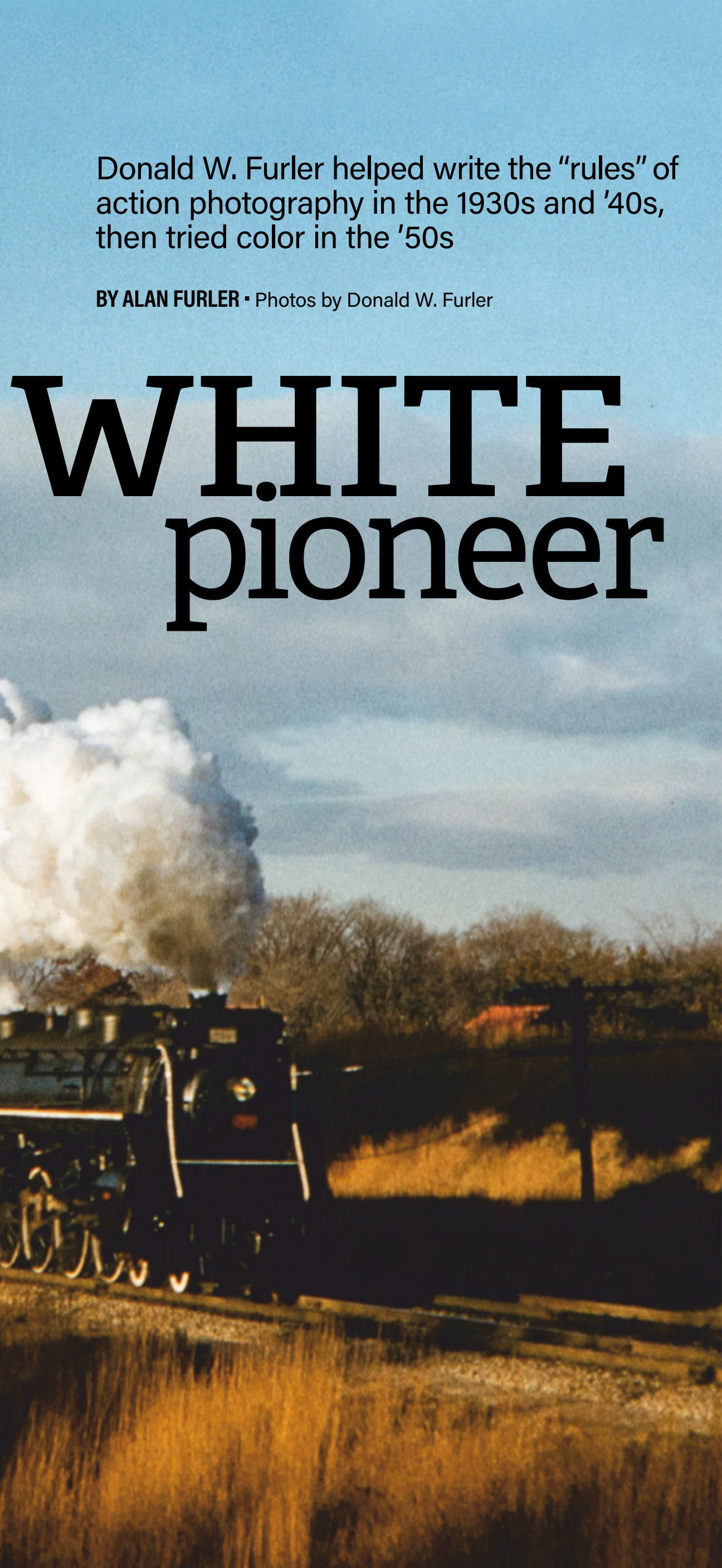


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CN 6226 climbs the grade at Aldershot, Ontario, with the *Maple Leaf* for Toronto. The all-heavyweight train has cars from New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, Ont. Author Furler and his dad rode the cab of this 4-8-4 with the same train on November 8, 1958, a few days before this photo. Regular CN steam ended in 1960.

**CN 6226 climbs the grade at Aldershot, Ontario, with the *Maple Leaf* for Toronto. The all-heavyweight train has cars from New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, Ont. Author Furler and his dad rode the cab of this 4-8-4 with the same train on November 8, 1958, a few days before this photo. Regular CN steam ended in 1960.**





Donald W. Furler helped write the “rules” of action photography in the 1930s and ‘40s, then tried color in the ‘50s

BY ALAN FURLER • Photos by Donald W. Furler

# WHITE pioneer

**MY DAD LOVED STEAM LOCOMOTIVES** and trains. Long-time readers of Kalmbach publications may remember his black-and-white photos. In 2017 I donated most of his negatives to the Center for Railroad Photography & Art. Of course, I am pleased that the Center has recently released a new book, *The Railroad Photography of Donald W. Furler*, by CRPA President Scott Lothes [page 6; also see “Archive Treasures,” page 16, Summer 2019 CLASSIC TRAINS].

Around 1955 Dad bought a Leica camera to start taking 35mm color slides, which I am in the process of donating to the Center as well. Very few of his color images have been published, and this gallery will just be an introduction. Most of the photos here depict regular steam operations, but in later years he shot many fantrips and tourist railroads, too.

After scrambling to capture whatever he could of disappearing steam close to home in New Jersey and on his favorite railroads, Dad had to range farther afield. By the mid-1950s there were just a few pockets of regular steam operation in the U.S. The Pennsylvania’s iron ore trains on the Shamokin branch with multiple I1 Decapods and the last stand of its K4 Pacifics along the North Jersey coast drew us and many other fans.

Much more steam was also still running in Canada, so Dad and I made many trips to Ontario and Quebec throughout the ‘50s. At first my dad brought along his trusty 5x7 Speed Graphic, but after a few months of owning the Leica, the relative ease of shooting with it won him over. Early color photography had some problems, though. With the limitations of ASA 10 speed Kodachrome film, he could not always capture action with desired sharpness. He also tried Anscochrome and some non-Kodak processing in an effort to improve results, but those experiments were less than successful. Fortunately, availability of ASA 25 Kodachrome in the early ‘60s made shooting color much easier.

For Dad’s black-and-white action photography with his Speed Graphics, the time required to change or flip film holders normally meant only one exposure of a moving train was possible. He then favored three-quarter-angle views, and timing was critical. By using roll film, he could take multiple shots, allowing his photographic style to become more flexible and varied. He shot more going-away views and scenes from greater distances. And, yes, he even photographed some diesels in later years. The experience after regular steam was gone was not as intense, and maybe not as satisfying, but generally more fun. These images reflect those changes that came with color.





Left: At Bayview Junction, a busy spot adjacent to Hamilton, Ont., the crew of CN 2-8-2 3422 awaits their next helper assignment as a CN train from Toronto passes the tower.

Right: Two employees in the foreground appear unfazed by the passage of CN 4-6-2 5611, freshly shipped sister 5548, and a Mikado tripleheading on a westbound freight approaching Hamilton West. Out of sight beyond the bridge is Bayview Junction.

Below: Temporarily assigned to the Central Vermont, Grand Trunk Western 4-8-2 6039 soars above the Lamoille River at Georgia, Vt., with CV's *Vermont*. At the rear of the White River Junction-St. Albans local is a lightweight sleeper from New York.







Above: CN Mogul No. 91 leads daily-except-Sunday mixed train 233 (Hamilton-Port Rowan, Ont.) just south of Caledonia. Sister No. 89 occasionally stars in similar scenes during photo charters on the Strasburg Rail Road.





Above: Canadian Pacific class D10 4-6-0 1025 does some switching with a freight train on CP subsidiary Quebec Central Railway at Vallee Junction, Que. Note the former silk car right behind the locomotive.

Right: Quebec Central train No. 1 has just left Marbleton, 28 miles into its Sherbrooke-Quebec City run. Furler's dad sent his son down the track to request smoke during the station stop. He had to do so through pantomime, as CP 2610's crew spoke only French!







**Above:** Just west of Easton, Pa., freshly restored Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 759 is bound for Jim Thorpe with a High Iron Co. excursion from Elizabeth, N.J., on September 21, 1968. The train used Jersey Central trackage and coaches. Furler stood on the Lehigh Valley's Easton & Northern bridge for the shot.

**Left:** T-1 4-8-4 2103 had one of the last regular steam assignments on the Reading at Gordon, Pa., assisting trains up the 2.6 per cent grade toward Locust Summit. Three sisters pulled Iron Horse Ramble trips 1959-64.





Above: Pennsy's famous K4s Pacifics made their last big stand on the New York & Long Branch, a joint PRR-Jersey Central line along the North Jersey coast. To balance power, one Sunday-afternoon train was often doubleheaded as seen here at Hazlet. PRR stopped using steam in 1957.

Left: Another late stronghold for PRR steam was the Shamokin (Pa.) Branch, on which heavy eastbound iron ore trains got pairs of 2-10-0s fore and aft. These two class 11s "Hippos" are pushing just west of Shamokin.

Right: Late in the day, late in the game, L1s 305 works north of Harrisburg, Pa. The engine, one of PRR's nearly 600 2-8-2s, was built in 1917 by the road's Juniata Shops.







**Left: Decapod 4635 and a sister heave on an ore train at Paxinos, Pa., 5.5 miles west of Shamokin. At Mount Carmel, 14 miles ahead, they'll turn the train over to the Le-high Valley for forwarding to Bethlehem.**

*ALAN FURLER inherited his dad's interest in rail photography. Retired from a career in biomedical engineering, he lives in Cape May, N.J. This is his first article in CLASSIC TRAINS.*





What's in a Photograph?

# New York Central westbound at Waterloo, Ind., 1949





**The Toledo Division of the New York Central** (227 miles from Berea, Ohio, at the west edge of Cleveland, to Elkhart Ind.) was noted for having most of the otherwise-scant mileage of two main tracks (instead of four or more) on the entire New York–Chicago main line. Waterloo was on the longest such segment, 51 miles Edgerton, Ohio–Millersburg, Ind. Waterloo, 15 miles west of Edgerton, was the point where NYC's Jackson, Mich.–Fort Wayne, Ind., branch crossed the Toledo Division mains. The crew on this train started 79 miles east at Toledo and has 54 miles to work before tying up at Elkhart.

### **1 Waterloo depot**

Built in 1883, this board-and-batten station, now owned by the city and relocated about 1,000 feet to the east in 1984, is a community center and museum. It also serves as the Amtrak stop for Waterloo (no agent or baggage checking), with most of the patrons coming from nearby Fort Wayne, 26 miles south. The operator's bay is missing now, destroyed in a 1957 derailment.

### **2 U.S. mail**

These sacks could either be awaiting an eastbound train or recently delivered from a westbound. The quantity suggests it is primarily Fort Wayne mail to or from eastern points such as upstate New York cities (Fort Wayne mail to/from New York City itself would most likely be handled by the Pennsylvania Railroad, as would most westbound mail, hence the likelihood this is eastbound mail). The mail connection to/from Fort Wayne would be by highway as the last passenger trains between Jackson and Fort Wayne operated in July 1943.

### **3 Express building**

It's unusual for this to be a separate building at a small-town station; at such points express was usually handled by the railroad's agent rather than by a Railway Express Agency em-

ployee, and kept in the baggage room — there was an ample one at the west end of the depot.

### **4 Wooden passenger platform**

For serving eastbound trains, reached by a wooden crossing.

### **5 127-lb. Dudley rail**

NYC's standard mainline rail since 1925, named for the designer of this rail section, Plimmon H. Dudley, NYC's consulting metallurgist. The section uses a taller web and thinner head than most, giving greater beam strength in less weight, and is easily identified in the field by its "soft roll" top fillet of the angle bar. Kansas City Southern was the only other railroad to use it. Dudley first developed the concept of a tall-web rail in 1884 with an 80-lb. section, which NYC increased later to a 105-lb. section and then 127.

### **6 Class L-2d 4-8-2 Mohawk 2952**

Built in 1929 by Alco as 2452 and became 2952 in NYC's 1936 renumbering. It appears the train was slowed or stopped and is now accelerating, because white steam from the booster exhaust is visible behind the stack (the white exhaust ahead of the stack is from auxiliaries including the air pumps and the feedwater heater pump.) The booster would only be used in starting or below 15 mph or so. Westbound NYC freights usually had lots of empties, so this train is probably not heavy, nor is there a significant grade to climb. The black smoke suggests the fireman had just operated the stoker before an unexpected stop and now the reduced draft created by the exhaust has not yet been sufficient for good combustion. Except on the Michigan Central, NYC freight engines had footboards instead of a pilot.

### **7 Interlocking home signal**

Three upper-quadrant semaphores, all in the stop position, having dropped after the engine passed the signal. On NYC, the flat ends of the

blades indicate an interlocking signal, while a pointed end would denote an automatic block signal. Having three units on the mast enabled several aspects that governed the speed to the next signal or within interlocking limits — NYC was speed-signaled rather than route-signaled as most railroads are.

### **8 Water plug in distance**

Fed by city water that replaced a wood tank, the plug would not normally be used by through trains, since there were track pans at Stryker, 32 miles to the east, and Corunna, 6 miles west.

### **9 Whistle post**

For Center Street, which crosses about 1,000 feet east. The instrument case behind the post is apparently related to the electro-pneumatic portion of the interlocking (see item 12).

### **10 Freighthouse, with office space above**

It is unusual to have a separate freighthouse

and clerks at a small-town station. There was a fairly large stock pen just east of the freight-house; the chute for it is visible.

### **11 Milepost**

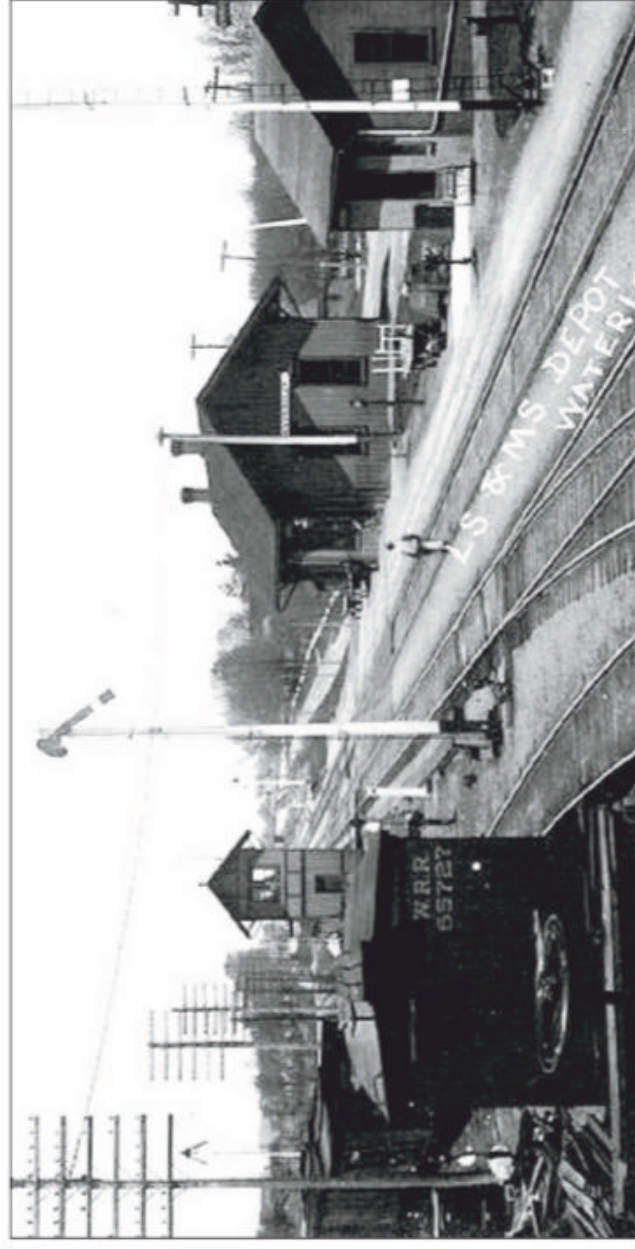
"B 367" indicates number of miles to Buffalo, N.Y.

### **12 East connecting tracks**

To the Jackson–Fort Wayne line and the freight-house yard. A pneumatic pipe that is part of the WX interlocking (see photo below), inside wood shielding, rests on concrete supports. There was also a west connection that led to two longer tracks paralleling the main line for interchange with the branch.

### **13 Operating rods**

Cradled on rollers, the rods transmitted the mechanical action of levers in WX tower to the home signal (item 7); a wooden walkway made it easier to cross the rods without stepping on them.



Circa 1907, WX tower stands at the crossing of the Jackson, Mich.–Fort Wayne, Ind., line, a train from which is switching on the east connecting track. "LS&MS" written on the photo refers to Lake Shore & Michigan Southern, which merged with its parent New York Central & Hudson River in 1914 to form the New York Central. LS&MS changed from left- to right-hand operation around this time. Courtesy William H. Willenar Genealogy Center, Eckhart Public Library, Auburn, Ind.





# Working for the **PENN**





**BY WILLIAM E. BOTKIN** • Photos by the author

**ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN** in Ann Arbor in fall 1967 was my first time living away from my boyhood home in Morristown, N.J. Of course my focus was on doing well in college, though once I settled into a routine and got to know the town, I used my limited spare time to explore the railroad scene.

Since I didn't own a car, walking was my primary mode of transportation. The New York Central depot was about a half mile from my dorm, and the Ann Arbor Railroad was even closer. I generally photographed only scheduled NYC passenger trains on weekends and occasionally an NYC freight when it happened to be running around the time of the passenger schedule.

Traffic on the freight-only Ann Arbor was not scheduled, so any shots of freights there was pure luck. I did discover that the university had a coal-fired power plant that was served by a spur from the NYC main line. The school had its own 44-ton switcher to move the coal hoppers around for un-

**Left: PC GP40 3034 leads two SD45s on eastbound NY-4 through Ann Arbor on a dreary January 1969 day. The train carries reefers and stock cars in its consist.**

**Below: The sign on Penn Central's Ann Arbor station was quite ornate, indicating the distances to Detroit, Buffalo (via Canada), and Chicago.**



A passion for trains as a college student turned into a brief railroad career

# CENTRAL





**Above:** On a rather nasty March 1968 day, Penn Central U25B 2507, still in New York Central livery, heads west through Ann Arbor.



**Right:** Two months after the PC merger, ex-NYC F7 1805 leads an eastbound freight as it brakes to pick up orders at Ann Arbor in April 1968. Behind the F7 are an ex-PRR GP9B and an ex-NYC GP7.



loading, though I never managed to get a shot of it doing any switching.

After a few visits to the NYC depot, I got to know the passenger agent and block operator. While I don't recall either's name, I do remember that the passenger agent was a pleasant white-haired gentleman who was eager to offer information to a young railfan. At the time, selling sleeping space on passenger trains was still a primitive affair using teletype machines to request and confirm space. Watching the agent reserve space and get a response on the teletype was fascinating to see.

Getting to know the NYC op-

erator helped my photography of freights trains as he could advise me of imminent movements whenever I turned up. Of course, I was still limited to locations I could access on foot, usually in the vicinity of the depot. I tried to make my way down to the depot anytime there was a significant snow to capture winter action. In 1968, there were still a quite few F units on freights, though the newer second-generation power was becoming more common.

I soon began to meet local railfans while hanging around the station. A couple of the older enthusiasts owned cars, which made it possible to explore other nearby

railroads, including the Chesapeake & Ohio in Plymouth. One of the fans in our group, Harry Stegmeier, was quite a passenger-train expert, and he convinced a group of us to take a trip from Plymouth to Toledo on the soon-to-be-discontinued Baltimore & Ohio *Cincinnatian* that ran from Detroit to Cincinnati. We drove over to Plymouth one day in April 1968 to catch the southbound *Cincinnatian*. The consist was two B&O E8s, four express cars, an RPO, baggage car, a buffet coach, and two coaches.

Our southbound trip was uneventful, arriving in Toledo at 12:10 p.m. on schedule. After de-





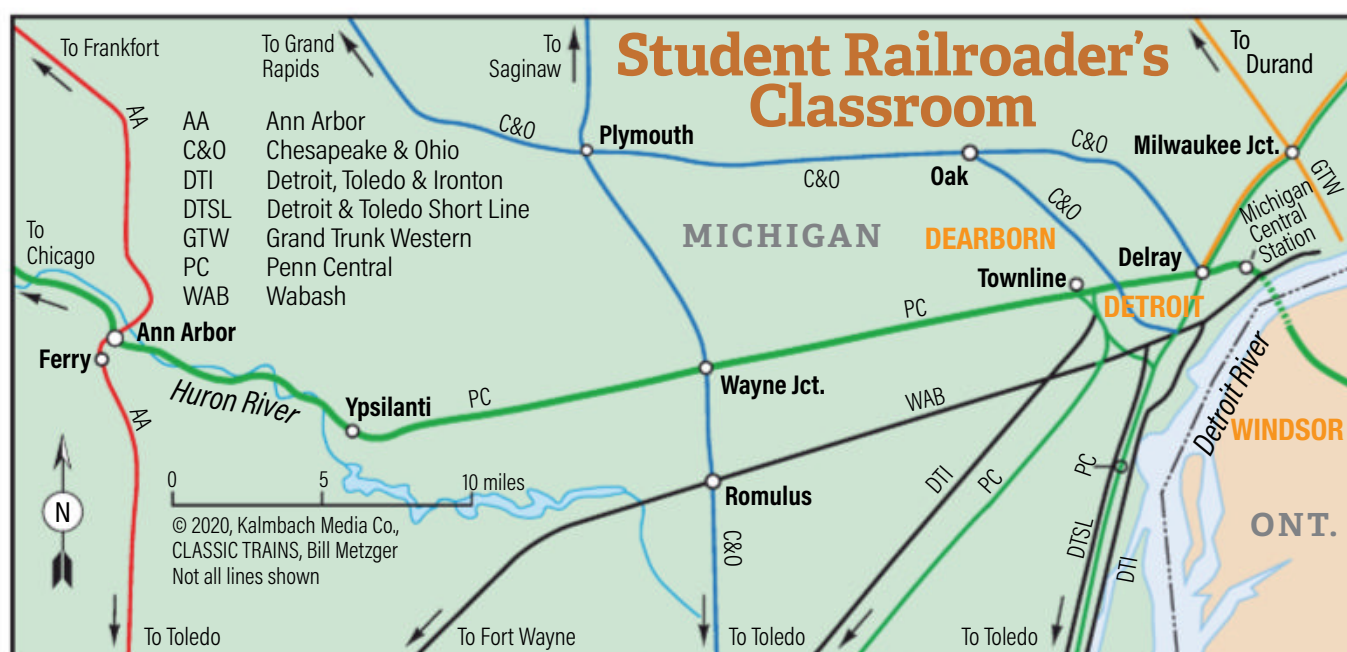
B&O E8 1448 heads the *Cincinnatian* into the station at Plymouth, Mich., in April 1968. Author Botkin and friends boarded here for a ride to Toledo.

training, we had an opportunity to examine several retired Penn Central (by now, the PRR-NYC merger had taken place) passenger cars, including former *20th Century Limited* observation car *Sandy Creek*.

Our northbound *Cincinnatian*, No. 53, had one B&O E8 with a single coach. When our group boarded for the 2:20 p.m. departure back to Plymouth, we knew something was wrong. After pulling ahead a few hundred feet and then stopping, we reversed back into the Toledo station. The conductor then told us that there was just too much freight traffic on the line to run the passenger train that day and announced that the train was officially annulled. We were advised to see the ticket agent inside the station. The ticket agent arranged and paid for our group to be transported back to Plymouth in taxis! Certainly it was a unique experience, but not as satisfactory as returning to Plymouth by train.

## RAILFAN FREEDOM

By the time I was a sophomore in fall 1968, I was able to buy my first car — a basic two-door 1968 Chevrolet Malibu — and keep it parked at my dorm's



New York Central observation car *Sandy Creek*, built for the 1948 *20th Century Limited*, sits "white-lined" near Toledo station in April 1968.





**A southbound Ann Arbor freight, pulled by two GP7s of parent Detroit, Toledo & Ironton, prepares to make a set-out in its namesake city in April 1968.**

parking lot. This opened up more photographic possibilities, as I was no longer restricted to locations I could reach by campus bus or on foot. I could roam further on weekends without affecting my studies too much.

In October, the Grand Trunk Western operated several excursions with GTW 5629, a 4-6-2 restored by Chicagoan Richard Jensen, over a number of lines out of Detroit. I rode one trip, but chased the rest, including one on October 8 during which I met steam photographer Victor Hand. We were both chasing the train that day, and ended up at Milwaukee Junction in Detroit to take night photos. It was drizzling, but we were determined to try for a shot. We had flashbulbs to light the scene, but were bothered by a floodlight on top of the sand tower that was causing a glare in

**Steam photographer Victor Hand scaled the sanding tower at Milwaukee Junction to cover a floodlight while taking night photos of GTW 5629.**

our lenses. In some cases, these yard lights were controlled by a photoelectric eye, and shooting a flashbulb at it would often fool the sensor and turn off the light for several minutes — enough time to bang off a shot. That didn't work, so Victor climbed the sand tower and threw his raincoat over the offending light, which solved the problem. I'm not sure if he ever retrieved his raincoat, however!

Meanwhile, trying to shoot the Ann Arbor was still a hit-and-miss affair because of the infrequent trains. Most AA freights I managed to find were hauled by Detroit, Toledo & Ironton units since the two roads were operated as one and pooled their power. In October, I captured a special movement over the Ann Arbor on the Saturday when the University of Michigan played Michigan



State. The Michigan-Michigan State game was the highlight of the football season for the fans. For the occasion, MSU chartered a passenger special operated by the GTW from Lansing to Ann Arbor using the GTW and AA trackage, arriving at Ferry Yard in Ann Arbor to unload passengers — just a short walk from the stadium [“What's in a Photograph?” Summer 2017 CLASSIC TRAINS]. Not being a football fan, my focus was on getting shots of the special







Left: A GTW football special crosses the Huron River on the Ann Arbor Railroad after the game, heading back to East Lansing.

Below: Botkin issued this clearance form and train order while working as an operator at Ann Arbor on January 12, 1969.

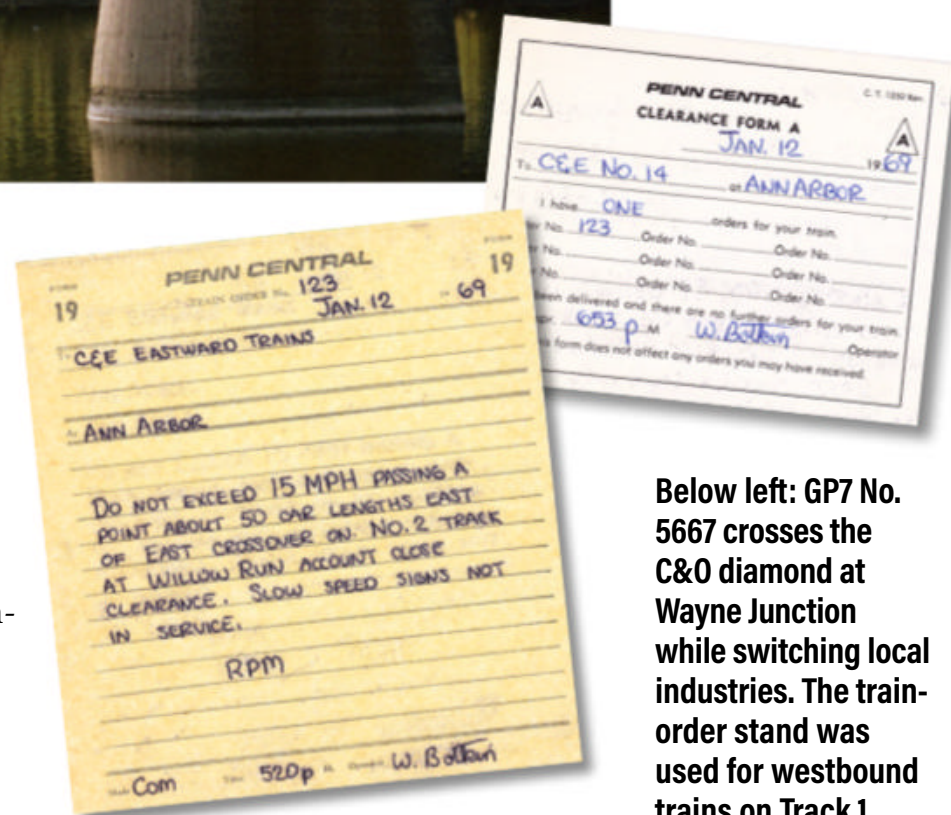
on the AA as it arrived, and while leaving over the Huron River bridge as it departed Ann Arbor on its return to Lansing.

## HIRING OUT

My frequent visits to the Ann Arbor depot and talks with the afternoon operator, David Hieb, resulted in his suggestion that I apply for a job with the Penn Central as a block operator. The idea was appealing, as it combined my interest in railroads with a job that paid some serious money. I wasn't quite sure how I could manage, since as a new hire I would be at the bottom of the seniority list and might not be able to bid on jobs that would fit with my class schedule.

Nevertheless, I took a chance and applied for a position as block operator at the Michigan Division headquarters in the old Michigan Central Depot and office building in Detroit in late fall 1968. After passing a physical on November 20, I was given a rule book, timetable, and switch key and told to report to work, or "post," as a student operator at Wayne Junction, which was located between Ann Arbor and Detroit, to learn the job of block operator.

The posting process went pretty quickly and I was qualified for service on December 29. Soon after qualifying, I was assigned to



Below left: GP7 No. 5667 crosses the C&O diamond at Wayne Junction while switching local industries. The train-order stand was used for westbound trains on Track 1.

the afternoon shift at Wayne Junction, which ran from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. This worked out well since I was able to arrange all my classes in the morning, giving me time to get to Wayne Junction for my shift. Still living in a UofM dorm, I had

Below: The tower at Wayne Junction had an "Armstrong"-style machine. Levers painted white are out of service.





Right: Because of a wreck on the Water Level Route, PC train LS-1, headed by GP40 3046 and two GE units, detours through Ann Arbor on January 12, 1969.

Below: Also in January '69, Botkin hoops up orders at Ann Arbor to the head end and rear end of east-bound JT-3, which sported an ex-PRR cabin car on this day.



to stop on my way to work each afternoon to buy a sandwich at a local diner for my "lunch."

Penn Central's Wayne Junction was a level crossing with the C&O. During my shift, I saw only four or five PC passenger trains, a

handful of through freights, and a local switch job. The C&O only had a few trains, but it did include two passenger trains and some freights. "Armstrong" levers were used to control the turnouts, crossovers, and signals. The PC line was double track, whereas the C&O was single through the interlocking. Even though the tower had a train-order delivery stand, orders were rarely issued, except for slow orders, since the PC was a signaled, double-track railroad. One thing that I did during the posting process was to draw a detailed diagram of the "plant" or tracks indicating the switches and signals as well as any track names that were used.

As Wayne Junction wasn't particularly busy, there was time for me to study for my courses between trains. Of course this would have been frowned upon by management, but I never let my school work get in the way of my duties as an operator. Still, I always had one eye out for any unannounced vehicles approaching the tower, such as a signal maintainer, so I could put my books out of sight.

Being new to working on the railroad, I rarely brought my camera with me to work as I was worried about being labeled a railfan and not being taken seriously, or worse, being fired. My time working at Wayne Junction was limit-





ed, as I was filling in for a regular operator who was on vacation.

My next posting was my old haunt, Ann Arbor. Now, I hit the jackpot since I could get to work in matter of minutes from my dorm or classes. This posting had potential, and I quickly qualified on January 4, 1969. I was assigned to work on the swing shift, which meant varying hours depending on the day of the week, but I was still able to attend my classes and be available for my shifts.

The Ann Arbor operator worked in the depot in the same area as the passenger agent, and was expected to answer questions from the public when the agent was off duty. Generally the questions were concerning estimated arrival times for trains. When needed, I was able to get information by calling the dispatcher, which made me look quite knowledgeable to the passengers!

There were no turnouts or interlocking signals to control in Ann Arbor, only a train-order signal. The signal was always set to red (stop) if there were no trains due. If a train was due, the signal was set to either yellow or green, indicating that an operator was on duty. For trains not requiring orders, the signal was set to green. If a train had no orders, it was important to set the order signal to



clear just as the train “hit the bell” so it wouldn’t encounter an approach intermediate signal as it neared Ann Arbor. For trains needing to pick up orders, the signal was set to yellow, indicating that orders had to be picked up.

If the operator needed to stop a train for some purpose such as delivering a Clearance Card A with “19” orders, then the order board was set to red until the crew received the documents. In my experience, this was not typical, thanks to the double-track main line, so situations like meet orders or running against the current of traffic were unusual. Of

course, as an operator, my other duty was to “OS” the train and record the time and lead engine number on the train sheet. The other times recorded for each train were the times at Wayne Junction, which was a manned tower, and at “XN,” the location at which a train would “hit the bell” and either enter or clear the block west of Ann Arbor.

Orders were delivered by train-order forks with the order tied to a loop of string and then clipped to the Y-shaped fork. The idea was for the operator to position the fork at just the right height and distance from the locomotive

**Top: NYC train 17 for Chicago makes a stop at Ann Arbor in January 1968, less than a month prior to the PC merger.**

**Above: Eastbound NY-4 led by GP40 3122 passes under the Broadway Street bridge in Ann Arbor, on the morning of January 12, 1969. Note the stock cars behind the power.**





**Above: E8 4039 arrives in Ann Arbor with a two-car No. 354 on a gloomy March 1969 day.**

**Right: PC operated a weekday commuter run from Detroit to Ann Arbor. Here, RDC M-455 as train 357 has just discharged passengers at Ann Arbor in March 1969.**



and caboose, so the engineer and conductor could snag the loop of string on the fly with their arm. If either end missed, the train had to be stopped to retrieve the order — a situation that did not make for a happy crew.

In general, trains slowed to around 40 mph so the crewmen could collect their orders. This operation wasn't too difficult in daytime. Night was a different matter — positioning the fork in just the spot for the engineer at night while looking into the blinding headlight of the locomotive was challenging. It was always better to hold the fork a bit further out from the rails rather than risk it hitting the side of the locomotive before the engineer could grab his orders. Spotting the fork

for the caboose was always easier, as it was no problem to gauge the distance as the cars in the train passed prior to the caboose. After the head end passed the depot the engineer typically opened up the throttle, so by the time the rear end passed, it was doing 50 mph. You always hoped that there wasn't a loose piece of steel strapping on one of the cars as you stood next to the moving train.

On January 11, shortly after I qualified at Ann Arbor, there was a major wreck on the PC main line between Elkhart and Toledo. As a result, all mainline trains were detoured over the Michigan Division for several days. During the first 24-hour period, there were 13 westbound and 15 eastbound trains through Ann Arbor.



This was about a 50 percent increase over the typical traffic on the line, making for a busy day.

My stint as Ann Arbor operator was short-lived, although being further away from the head office in Detroit, I managed to take quite a few photos while working there. I was excited to still be able to work out a class schedule that fit into my work shifts.

One of the requirements to be qualified as a block operator was to pass the "Rules for Conducting Transportation" and "Special Instructions Governing Operation of Signals and Interlockings" examination and have your employees' timetable checked for correct inclusion of updates. This was conducted by J. P. Seehaver in the Michigan Central Depot in Detroit. I passed my exams on January 10 and soon after I was sent to qualify at Townline.

Once qualified at Townline, I was assigned to the night shift — midnight to 8 a.m. Townline was the entrance to a freight yard be-



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tween Dearborn and Detroit. The operator worked out of a small single-story structure, but there were no levers to control the signals, turnouts, or crossovers. Trains entering or leaving the yard had to be lined by the operator using hand-thrown turnouts, and that wasn't much fun on a dark winter night. Even with the manual turnouts, I was still able to get some studying done. About the only people who poked their head in the door at Townline were train crews, and they didn't care that I was studying between trains so long as their train wasn't delayed getting out of the yard.

### CLASSES COME FIRST

Working my midnight to 8 a.m. shift, driving back to Ann Arbor to attend classes all morning, and then trying to get some sleep in the afternoon began to get difficult after a few months. It was a long drive from Ann Arbor to Townline, and that plus the night hours started to take a toll

on my classwork and grades.

If I could hang on until classes ended in May, I would be free to work any location assigned at least until the following September when classes resumed. I was actually thinking about quitting school entirely and committing to a railroad career. Unfortunately, before the end of the school year, I was assigned to a location that made it impossible to continue with classes and work for the Penn Central. For a college student in 1969, making \$3 an hour was big money, but in the end I reluctantly decided to quit the railroad rather than drop out of college.

Nevertheless, I continued to photograph the PC around Ann Arbor that spring before returning home to New Jersey for the summer. By then, the power was getting decidedly dirty and the passenger service was in serious decline. The weekday commuter train from Ann Arbor to Detroit had become just a single Rail Diesel Car.

When I returned home for summer break, I heard from a friend who was a tower operator for the Erie Lackawanna that the EL was hiring student operators for the summer to fill in for regular operators on vacations — but that's another story. I never did try to rehire on the PC even after finishing college. I did interview for a management training job with the Southern Pacific as a trainmaster, though by then I had made the decision to pursue a career outside the railroad industry and keep railroads as an avocation — a decision that I never regretted. ■

*WILLIAM E. BOTKIN, who is retired from a career in telecommunications, has photographed railroads since the early 1960s. He has co-authored two books and written several articles on steam locomotives in South Africa and China. In recent years, he has focused his energies on model railroading with numerous published articles. This is his second CLASSIC TRAINS byline.*

**GE U30B 2955 and two Alco C430s still in NYC paint power a long eastbound, possibly NY-4 with its head-end stock cars and reefers, along the Huron River just east of Ann Arbor in April 1969.**



# Santa Fe, all the way...

Rides on AT&SF's two transcontinental routes opened up new vistas

BY J. DAVID INGLES

Photos by the author

For a railfan with a bit of "Santa Fe blood" in my veins, even by 1962 my AT&SF "mileage map" of lines ridden could be described as pathetic. Our family lived in south suburban Chicago until moving to Dearborn, Mich., in 1956, but all except a couple of our annual two-week summer vacation trips in the 1950s were by rail from Chicago to Colorado. (We drove east in 1953 and '57.) Until 1959, all the Denver trips were on the Burlington Route [see "Overnight to Denver," Spring 2004 CLASSIC TRAINS]. Those "blood links" were twofold, in-

cidentally. My paternal grandfather was a true boomer railroader, working as a trainman for Santa Fe out of Arkansas City, Kans., and for Soo Line out of Glenwood, Minn., depending on the agricultural season. Dad was born in Glenwood in October 1907; his father took ill on a trip for the Brotherhood, I believe in St. Louis, but died soon after his union brothers made sure he got home to Minnesota safely. Dad and his mother then returned to "Ark City," where, now a widow, she was eligible to return to her job from a few years before as a Harvey Girl in the Ark City Harvey House restaurant at the Santa Fe depot. Harvey Girls had to be unmarried.





# to the 1964 ROSE BOWL

Interestingly, much of my early Santa Fe mileage would be on unscheduled trains, specifically “football specials.” The first was in fall 1959 when I attended the University of Colorado at Boulder. Each year an alumni group would set up a special train outing from Denver to an away game, this time overnight to Norman, Okla., on the Santa Fe for the October 3, 1959, contest against the powerful Soon-

ers, who drubbed Colorado 42-12 in the third game of the season. The train’s 759-mile route was direct for the Santa Fe but seemed exotic to me, via La Junta, Colo., and Newton, Kans. F7 quartet No. 40 led a mix of Hi-Level coaches and Pullman sleepers; unfortunately we didn’t see the sun the entire trip. TRAINS Editor David P. Morgan printed a photo of mine of the train in Denver as a “News Photo” in the

February 1960 issue.

My second Santa Fe ride was on regularly scheduled trains, the middle link in a don’t-change-Chicago-stations, three-railroad itinerary to go home for the 1959 Christmas holidays, riding Missouri Pacific’s *Colorado Eagle* from Denver to Kansas City, then Santa Fe’s *Chicagoan*, and finally Grand Trunk Western’s *Inter-City Limited*, in a roomette on the



Santa Fe F3s 28 and 29 fly green flags on sections of train 18 at Albuquerque on January 3, 1964, during author Dave Ingles’ return trip from Los Angeles to Chicago.





**Dad signed up for a package by train, of course. There were charter flights out of Chicago, but the majority of students, plus plenty of alums and friends, went by train.**



**Crews work to rerail Alco RSD5 2111, which apparently had an earlier incident while working at Pampa, Texas, prior to Dave's train passing it on December 27.**

Chicago–Detroit Pullman via Durand, Mich. On my westbound return, I rode GTW's *La Salle*; the first section of Santa Fe 19, the *Chief*; and again the *Colorado Eagle*. That was it for my riding Santa Fe until the waning days of 1963.

#### **SIXTH SECTION WESTBOUND**

My parents were University of Illinois graduates (they'd met at school), and they were loyal, meaning they wrote decent checks annually to the alumni association. The Fighting Illini have not been a consistent football power, but they've had their shining moments, and the 1963 season was one. Today it may not generally be recalled, but in that era, for the Illini the season didn't begin until the last Saturday of September and encompassed only nine games! They finished 7-1-1, including 5-1-1 in the Big Ten; their two non-conference games were victories over California and UCLA in what was then the Athletic Association of Western



E8m 80 on a two-car consist rests between Dave's special and two business cars at Amarillo on December 27, 1963. It is one of eight such units on the roster rebuilt from EMC E1s dating from 1937.



F7 No. 31 leads train 1, the *San Francisco Chief*, at Amarillo while sister No. 28 stands with one of the University of Illinois alumni association Rose Bowl specials on December 27. In the distance at right is another Warbonnet F unit, likely on another football special.

## Santa Fe, all the way west and back

December 26, 1963–January 4, 1964



Universities (AAWU). Illinois, after beating Northwestern and tying Ohio State, broke into Associated Press's Top 10 and would fluctuate between No. 2 and No. 8.

As Big Ten champions, the Pete Elliott-coached Illini were, of course, invited to the 1964 Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif., on New Year's Day, that year a Wednesday; the AAWU representative would be the University of Washington.

The UofI alumni association went into high gear, and Dad signed up for a package by train, of course. There were a handful of charter flights out of Chicago, but the majority of students, plus plenty of alums and friends, went by train, and to the Santa Fe in that era, special trains were routine. My sister Janis and I were both home from school for Christmas, and, having driven over from Michigan,

we celebrated the holiday itself with relatives on my mother's side in Chicago's west suburbs.

The next day, Thursday the 26th, having left our car at my maternal grandmother's house in south suburban Homewood and taking an Illinois Central suburban train downtown, at dusk we gathered among throngs of Illini faithful at Dearborn Station. Our train was com-





Dave's special overtakes eight SD24s, led by 926, on a westbound freight at Vaughn, N.Mex., on December 27. Santa Fe's 80 SD24s were delivered 1959-60.



An A-B-B-B-A set of F units heads a freight at Vaughn while Dave's train west passes. Vaughn is where Santa Fe's southern main line crosses above SP's Golden State Route.



Five blue-and-yellow Fs bring a freight into Belen in golden evening light. Note the block of home-road reefers at the head end. Today, Belen is a major point on successor BNSF Railway's Southern Transcon route.

prised of mostly, if not all, Pullmans, and the Ingles contingent had en-suite double bedrooms with the separating wall pushed back. We were to operate as a following section of train 17, the combined *Super Chief-El Capitan*, due out at 6:30 p.m. and running as separate sections over the holidays. Turns out that our Pullman was in what would be the sixth section of train 17, meaning there were at least four Illini football specials that evening.

This was foremost a family vacation, so train photography opportunities were limited, and my photo notebook contains mostly just engine numbers. Vividly remembered, however, is that when Dad and I woke up next morning and looked

out the window, he instantly knew where we were — approaching the crossing of the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle. Out of Kansas City in the wee hours, we'd become the second section of train No. 1, the *San Francisco Chief*, which operated over what is today's BNSF "Transcon" freight artery. Decades later, I'd refer to this ride "treasured rare mileage."

The first slide of the day, taken from an open vestibule Dutch door, was of Alco RSD4 2111 being rerailed at Pampa, Texas. Evidenced by the accompanying photos, there was time at service and/or crew-change stops, such as Amarillo, to step off for shots from the ground. At Vaughn, N.Mex., we encountered three

freights. The last rays of sunlight for the day were at Belen, and we passed through Arizona in darkness.

I don't recall our passage over Cajon Pass, and I have no idea how our time-keeping was relative to the other Illini specials. However, to top off the rare mileage aspect of our westbound run, out of San Bernardino we were routed via the Third District through Riverside and Fullerton, today the only possible route to L.A. Union Station but in 1963 the one hosting a minority of Santa Fe's varnish, most trains using the First District via





**Baldwin DS-4-4-10 2295 works at Clovis, N.Mex., on December 27. The unit's single stack shows it to be a six-cylinder turbo-charged variant. The railroad had 41 such units, along with 59 V01000s and a single V0660, the former demonstrator 62000.**



**Another DS-4-4-10, 2292, works in the sun at Vaughn, with a trademark Santa Fe cupola caboose. The caboose number, 2089R, indicates that the car is radio-equipped.**

Pasadena. I'm guessing the fleet of UofI specials had an effect on train-crew rosters in both Kansas and California.

### SEEING THE SIGHTS

Since this family trip was our first time in the Los Angeles area, our priority was several well-known tourist attractions. We rented a car upon arrival Saturday morning, and on the rest of the weekend plus Monday, December 30, we took in Disneyland, Marineland, and Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, with its Rio Grande-equipped 3-foot-gauge steam "Calico Railroad." Dad and I also visited Travel Town in L.A.'s Griffith Park, with its locomotive displays.

The last day of 1963 was when Dad and I got in most of our railfanning.

While Mom and Janis went off on their own, my friend Alan Miller of Glendale, with whom I'd been trading slides by mail for some time, guided Dad and me first to Santa Fe's Redondo Junction roundhouse, home to its "high-hood" Alco switchers. The majority were in storage around the turntable, but a few were still in use, and only a handful had been repainted from their original black with silver stripes to blue-and-yellow. We then visited Southern Pacific's Taylor Yard, where I took copious diesel roster shots, SP being a road I rarely saw.

After our railfanning, it being New Year's Eve, we four joined other out-of-towners, and a lot of locals, in walking

among the buildings and sites where the Rose Parade floats were getting their finishing touches. Next morning, we rode one of the alumni group's chartered buses to reserved bleacher seats along the parade route. Unfortunately for Dad and his camera, the parade approached us coming right out of the sun, so he took only a few parade slides to help remember the day. The afternoon Rose Bowl game was memorable: In a rare Big Ten victory for the era, Illinois beat Washington, 17-7.

Next day, Thursday, January 2, 1964, was departure day, but not until late afternoon, so Dad and I dropped by Mission Tower near LAUPT for a short time, specifically to see Santa Fe Alco PAs, then





On a December 31 tour of Los Angeles rail facilities, Dave found a sextet of F units idling between freight assignments at Redondo Junction.



Also at Redondo Junction, 1939-built Alco HH1000 switcher 2310 rests with a sister. Today, this is the site of Amtrak's L.A. maintenance facility.



Baldwin DS-4-4-10 2283 works at Albuquerque on January 3 while passengers stroll along the station platform. Note the Hi-Level passenger car in the *El Capitan* to the right.



EMD F7 21 leads a section of train 18, the *Super Chief-El Capitan*, at Kennedy, N.Mex., just west of Lamy. Dave got this shot from the Dutch door of his eastbound train.

regulars on the five *San Diegans* in each direction. We turned in the rental car at the station, and boarded our special train for Chicago, again ensconced in adjoining double bedrooms.

### EASTWARD DIFFERENCE

Nearly six decades after the fact, specifics are hazy and slides almost non-existent, but we ran all the way to Chicago on the route of the *Super Chief* and *El Capitan*, marking my first ride over the main passenger route via Raton Pass. The *Super* and *El Cap*, still running as separate sections three days after New Year's, weren't



Alco PAs 77 and 58 power one of the five daily *San Diegos* past Mission Tower in Los Angeles on January 2, the morning before the Ingles family returned east.



## My “grand finale” photo of the Rose Bowl odyssey was of a westbound Santa Fe freight powered by four GP20s just west of Joliet.

due out of L.A. until after sunset, but we left ahead of them, although by the time we arrived in Chicago, we were behind them. From the photo on pages 58–59, it’s possible the overtake occurred during the lengthy service stop at Albuquerque. I did not record, nor do I remember, any references as to our train being an extra or a section of a scheduled train.

Pasadena, the first stop on the First District out of L.A., in the fading afternoon light, took longer than normal. Our train had a baggage car up front, and it turns out our special was carrying the members of the Fighting Illini’s marching band; their instruments took some time to be loaded. The band’s hotel had been in Pasadena, logistically superior, especially with the instruments, to fighting L.A. traffic to and from Union Station.

I confess to remembering little of this eastbound trip, other than the slides I took at such places as Winslow, Ariz., and Gallup and Albuquerque, N.Mex. A family with a son about my age had a bedroom suite near ours, and I remember playing a lot of cards with him in a lounge car. It could be I was low on slide film, as the only entries in my photo notebook east of Albuquerque are single Santa Fe GP20s parked at Fort Madison (Shopton), Iowa, and Streator, Ill.

In late afternoon on Saturday, January 4, on the separated double track coming



**Four Santa Fe GP20s led by 1155 hustle a westbound freight through Joliet on January 4. In 37 miles, Dave and his family will arrive in Chicago, ending their Rose Bowl adventure.**

into Joliet, Ill., my “grand finale” photo was of a westbound freight from a Dutch door. Its power was four GP20s, about the only Santa Fe road units you’d see east of Kansas City in those days because of cab signal requirements. Coincidentally, immediately thereafter I took my last slides of the odyssey, the subject being of all things three Alcos at Gulf, Mobile & Ohio’s Joliet yard, an RS3 and two ex-Alton RS1s. I was attending college in central Illinois on a GM&O secondary line and 30 miles west of its Chicago–St. Louis main line, so that power was old hat to me.

But I’d seen the mainline world of Uncle John Santa Fe, from end to end, adding significant mileage to my log of a railroad of my grandfather. Filling in some of the “far corners” — to Richmond, Calif.; Pekin, Ill.; and several secondary lines in Texas and Arizona — would come later. ■

*J. DAVID INGLES, CLASSIC TRAINS’ senior editor 2000–2018 and later contributing editor, began his “Ingles Color Classics” series in 2011. He died in October 2020 at age 79 [see page 4].*



# C&NW's "hot corner"

**W**hen the Chicago & North Western's Proviso freight yard was placed in service in 1929 it was billed as the largest in the nation, if not the world. That probably was no longer the case in 1974 when I moved to the Chicago Division to take over the transportation operation, but it was still a big and busy place. Located about 15 miles west of Chicago, mostly within Proviso Township, the bulk of the yard (apart from its receiving yard, a.k.a. Yard 9), lay parallel to the railroad's east-west main line. Trains from the east on the Geneva Subdivision entered the yard at JN interlocking in Melrose Park; those from the west entered at HM in Elmhurst. Wisconsin Division trains arrived and departed Proviso at North Avenue, located at the north end of Yard 9.

In addition to the classification and related yards, Proviso was

headquarters for the Chicago Division, which consisted not only of Proviso itself (although that was the most important — and time-consuming), but also yards at 40th Street, Wood Street (including the new Global One intermodal terminal), North Avenue, and Weber, collectively known as the "Inner Zone." It also included Elk Grove yard the extensive suburban-train operation.

The Chicago Division was the C&NW's smallest in terms of mileage, but it more than made up for that in activity, intensity, and impact upon the rest of the railroad. The supervisory staff reflected this, as did the road's new (1972) "Division Manager" structure. Under this arrangement, assistant division managers in charge of freight transportation (which was me), suburban, mechanical, engineering, and administration all reported to the division manager, who would previously have been titled Super-





## The Chicago Division was small in mileage but immense in its impact on the railroad

**BY CHRIS BURGER** • Photos by the author

intendent. My staff consisted of a day and a night superintendent, a traveling engineer, and five trainmasters along with a general yardmaster and four yardmasters on each shift at Proviso, plus another superintendent and three trainmasters in the Inner Zone with a yardmaster on each shift at Wood Street and 40th Street. Ideally, everyone worked five days a week, but when things got backed up and congested it was often “all hands on deck” 24/7.

Motive power shortages and derailments were the principal reasons for us getting behind the eight ball, so to speak. This was before the prosperity brought by deregulation, and Proviso wasn't exempt from deferred maintenance and deteriorated track conditions. In fact, it may have been *more* susceptible because it was so difficult to schedule or perform maintenance without disrupting operations. Derailments, especially in the

classification bowl, were common. Finally we decided that long-term gain was worth the short-term pain, and we turned the place over to the Engineering Department during first trick one Monday a month. It was amazing to see what all could be accomplished: retarders replaced, tracks rehabbed and cleaned, switches replaced, and a lot more. It made a big difference and was good for morale too. I only remember once when we had to call it off because of operational requirements.

Derailments in Proviso that didn't require the wrecking outfit were handled by the trackmen, unlike other locations where carmen did the rerailing while trackmen waited. We did have a couple of big mainline derailments, too, at Shermer and at Skokie. Both were track-related and required the wrecking outfit.

Motive power was controlled on a system basis, and there



In early 1975, new SD38-2 6651 has arrived at the North Western's giant Proviso Yard outside Chicago with a transfer from Wood Street Yard. SD40-2s to power outbound trains look on at left.





**An SD40-2 and SD45 bring an eastward, Proviso-bound freight past the Elmhurst suburban-train station in mid-1974.**

wasn't a lot we could do about shortages except keep the yard as fluid as possible. We didn't get much sympathy from the power desk if the power for outbound trains was sitting at the yard board waiting to get in.

Proviso was built with manually controlled retarders to slow cars coming off the hump; unlike other yards, it was never converted to computer control. Nevertheless, we regularly humped 800 cars per shift, and 1,000 wasn't unheard of. There were two "hump leads" from Yard 9 (the receiving yard) to the top of the hump, and normal practice was to use one at a time and spread the cars across the 69 classification tracks. Cars bound for the north and east were assigned tracks on the north side starting with Track 1; those to the west went to the south side. If we needed to clear receiving tracks in a hurry, we'd look for trains to hump "side by side." The trouble with this was that it limited the ability to use all class tracks for both trains, so while it made

**Proviso was a "fast" hump, putting pressure and stress on the retarder operators. One, now retired, still has nightmares about it all.**

room in Yard 9 quickly, some of the cars had to be rehumped later. It was impressive to watch, however.

Proviso was a "fast" hump, with the grade off the crest accelerating cars quickly, boosting capacity and putting pressure and stress on the retarder operators in the three control towers. I correspond with one,

now retired, who tells me he still has nightmares about it all.

Another job made necessary by the hump operation, and the fact that the railroad was essentially downhill all the way to Lake Michigan, was "skateman." There were three per shift, each responsible for preventing run-outs on his assigned 33 tracks. This was done either by cutting a car or two off a cut and tying them down with hand brakes to stop cars humped into what would otherwise be a clear track, or by setting "skates" on a rail to stop oncoming cars. This was a dangerous job. I vividly remember a young skateman losing a leg and maybe more later when he either was struck by or was getting on a moving car.

With 20-plus originating and a like number of terminating trains a day, there was pressure to make room for inbound trains and get the outbounds made up and out on time with their ad-



**At Elmhurst, "Crandall cab" E8 505 heads west with a midday suburban train out of Chicago in mid-1974.**

vertised connections. My office was adjacent to the division manager's, and he had a mirror on the wall across from his desk in which he could see the hump. If he saw it wasn't moving, he'd be in my doorway or on the phone wanting to know why. I hated it, but had to admit it helped get the message and priority across — to me, but more importantly to the guys at the top of the hump who knew to expect a call if things stopped moving.

## **MORNING MEETINGS**

The North Western probably wasn't the first railroad to start



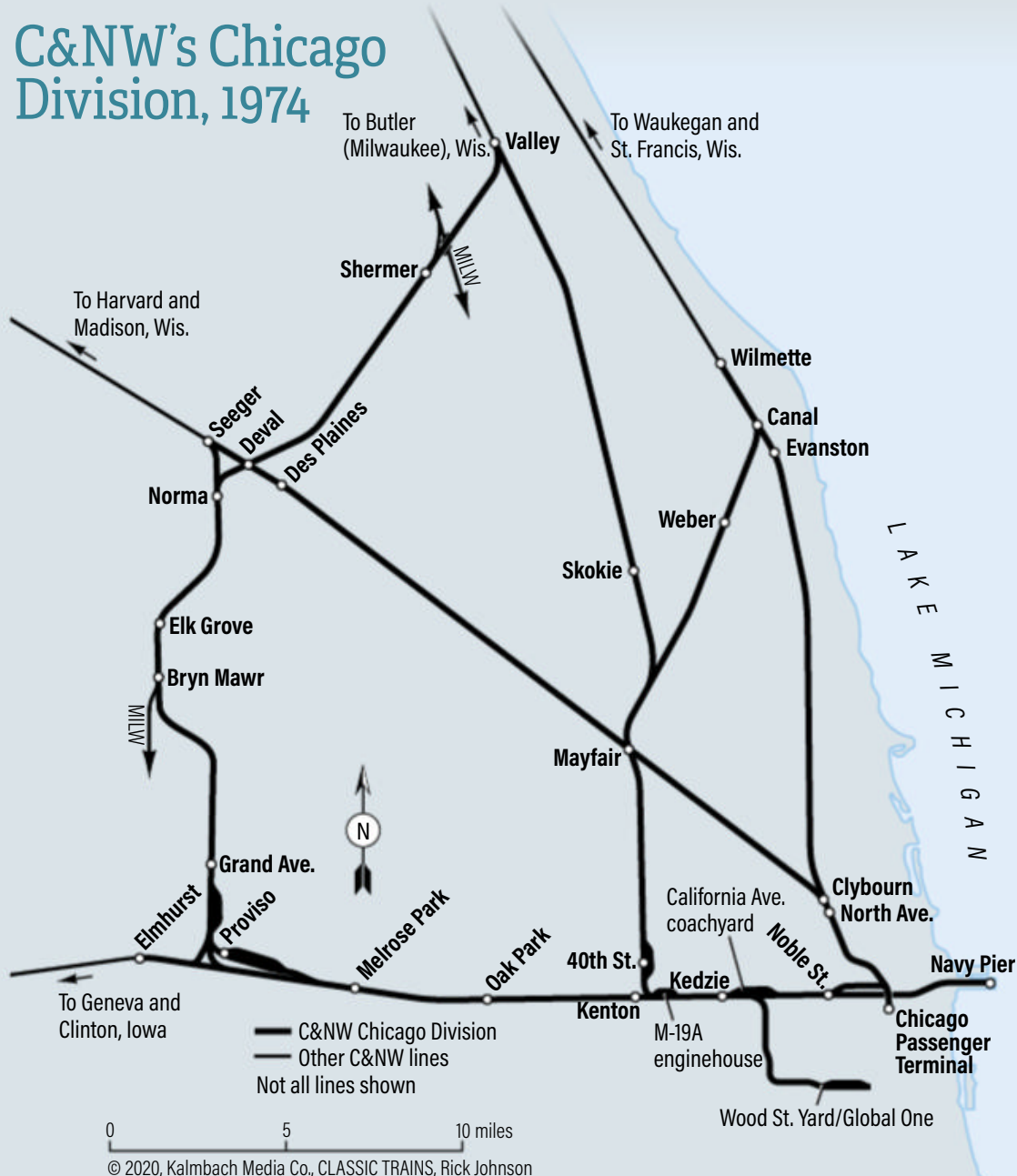


A "Falcon" piggyback train with C&NW and UP power passes JN, east entrance to Proviso, in April 1975. Having originated at Global One, the hotshot is bypassing Proviso on its dash west.

the work day with a morning meeting, but it received a lot of trade as well as newspaper press attention for the practice. I remember sitting in on it during my Train Accident Prevention days, at which time it was only headquarters staff participating. Sometime in the early 1970s, representatives from the divisions started to participate, too, with each of us reporting on things like yard conditions, injuries, major derailments, and the like. Each of the major yards had a set of standards which determined how it would report its condition at the meeting, "red or green." A red condition called for an explanation, which was never fun. One of the criteria at Proviso was condition red if there were more than 900 cars to be humped in Yard 9. The flag-pole outside the main office displayed a flag indicating the yard condition right below Old Glory, and no one wanted to start the day seeing it red — or to have to explain it.

Morning meetings could get pretty intense, especially after a major derailment, and I remember one in particular, following an Iowa Division derailment caused by a broken rail. In the mid 1970s the North Western was taking delivery on a large order of new covered hopper cars, a big deal for a cash-starved railroad like ours. They were built by Pullman-Standard in Pennsylvania and moved in blocks of 20 or so to the C&NW at Wood Street. From there they moved to Proviso in the nightly transfer run, which entered the yard on a lead track from JN interlocking

## C&NW's Chicago Division, 1974







**Short-term pain, long-term gain: Engineering Department crews swarm over Proviso's twin humps, shut down for their work, in 1974.**



**Wreckers from Proviso and Butler clean up a derailment at Shermer in 1974. The track in the foreground is the connection to the Milwaukee Road main line; MILW trains used C&NW to access Bensenville Yard.**

that ran right alongside the westbound departure tracks.

I happened to be out in the yard at around 3 o'clock one morning when the transfer arrived with a block of these cars on the head end and stopped right beside train 247, a hot Union Pacific run-through consisting mostly of empty refrigerator cars. It was scheduled to depart ahead of the suburban-train curfew around 6 a.m. and I thought we could make a quick

move to get the new hoppers on its head end to be set out in Iowa, saving a day or so of transit time.

This called for permission from Operations Control as the Train Operation Manual didn't provide for it, so I called, got permission, made the move, and hung around until 247 left on time. When I got back to work some hours later, the first person I saw asked if I'd heard that 247 had derailed somewhere in Iowa, destroying most of those brand-new cars. At the morning meeting, President Larry Provo, known for his astute and vigorous questioning, asked what they were doing on 247. He was told that I had suggested it and that Op Control thought it was a good move and approved it. Everyone held their breath until Provo said he agreed it was a good move at the time and that we were probably better off destroying empty covered hoppers than mechanical refrigerator cars.

### **WORKING THE "MANAGEMENT EXTRA BOARD"**

Sometime in late 1974 or early '75 the position of Assistant to the Division Manager was created on the Chicago and Iowa divisions. The job was to help out wherever the Division Manager felt it was needed, and to be in charge of the division in his absence. I called it the "management extra board" and had mixed emotions about the position, but it was a step up, with interesting possibilities.





**In May 1975, freight GP30s and a GP35 (top) and suburban E units (above) populate the tracks at the M-19A locomotive facility.**

Shortly after I took the job, the Assistant Division Manager, Mechanical, retired and I took over until a replacement could be found, which turned out to be several months. One of the nice things about the transportation job was that I got to work with and rely upon the mechanical and engineering people and learn something about their operation. This helped in my new job, as I knew the lay of the land and most of the people. The Mechanical Department included both motive power and car, each with its own organization and facilities. Motive power included the Proviso and M-19A diesel shops. The car department included the large Proviso repair track as well as the California Avenue passenger operation plus car inspectors at Proviso, Wood Street, Global One, and 40th Street.

I suspect that in my mechanical role I learned more than I contributed, except maybe in the safety area. I had always wondered why Car Department employees, unlike those in Engineering and Motive Power, were not required to wear hard hats. Following the third head injury within a couple of months sustained by Proviso car inspectors while coupling air hoses, I issued instructions requiring them. There was grumbling among the employees, but it was generally agreed that the move made sense. The same was not the case with the heads of the Car Department in system headquarters. I don't remember why — maybe because “an outsider” had done it — but they took the issue to Vice President, Operations, Jim Zito and came away with an agreement requiring “bump hats,” a smaller and lighter

version of the hard hat. Overall I think the mechanical organization benefited from my fresh set of eyes, and I picked up some knowledge and perspective that helped me in subsequent jobs.

Finally, in May 1975 a new Assistant Division Manager, Mechanical, was appointed, about the time when it was realized that the “Assistant to” positions weren't such a good idea. The Assistant Division Manager, Transportation, position on the Twin Cities Division became open and was the next step in my railroad odyssey, and high on my list of favorite jobs. We'll cover it in the next edition. Meanwhile, stay safe! 📷



*CHRIS BURGER, retired since 1998 from a career with NYC, New Haven, C&NW, Central Vermont, and Central of Indiana, lives with his wife Rita in Indiana. This is the 12th entry in his “Best of Everything” retrospective series.*



GP9 9088 switches beside the IC freighthouse at Dixon, Ill., in October 1973. Somewhere inside is an orphaned piece of PFE equipment unloaded 7 years ago. Mike McBride

# The freezer and the heater

Teamwork at an Illinois Central freighthouse

**In spring 1966, while still in high school,** I hired out on the Illinois Central in my hometown of Dixon, Ill. Dixon was on the IC's "Gruber Line," a colloquial moniker for the road's "Charter Line" running the length of the state from Freeport in the northwest corner to Cairo at Illinois' foot. Dixon was still a busy spot for the IC. We had a fairly large yard for a small town, an interchange with the Chicago & North Western's "Overland Route" main line, and our own local switch engine.

IC operations were based out of a large brick freighthouse, where worked an agent, a chief clerk, and a demurrage clerk on first trick. I worked the second-trick operator job that began at 4 p.m., an hour before the switch engine crew did.

Arriving for work one afternoon, I was surprised to see a bright orange Pacific Fruit Express "freezer" (ice-bunker refrigerator car) spotted at the freight-

house platform. It must have been repainted recently, as it really stood out in a yard that usually was full of cement cars, coal-hopper cars, and dull red boxcars. When I went into the office, I asked the agent about it. He said it was a car of melons for the Dixon Fruit Co. This firm occupied an old building on the Sandusky industrial spur, a 3½-mile-long track down along the Rock River east to a cement plant.

Shortly, the profoundly rotund chief clerk, Laverne Gardner, appeared, carrying some rope. He was a man of few words and didn't waste any. "Follow me!" he barked as he swept past. I looked at the agent, who just smiled and nodded in Laverne's direction. I followed him out onto the platform and the PFE freezer.

"We have to get the heater out of this car," he said. "I opened the hatches this morning, and all the poison gas should have vented out by now" (the operative

words here are "should have"). It was then that I noticed, stapled to the car door, a placard with a skull and crossbones and the warning DANGER! POISON GAS! I realized then that an alcohol-fueled heater must have been placed in one of the car's ice bunkers to keep the lading from freezing as the car passed through the mountains east from California, and that also it would have filled the car with deadly carbon monoxide gas.

Because the car was still under load, the side doors couldn't be opened. Laverne laboriously started up the ladder on the end of the car, and I dutifully followed. When we got to the roof, he admonished me for not waiting for him to complete his climb before I started up. Well that's true, I thought. If he had missed a rung and fallen on me, I would have been squashed flat, leaving only a grease spot on the platform!

I was still unsure of exactly what we



were doing, but it was dawning on me that I was going to be the one chancing the poison gas. "Here, tie this rope around your waist," Laverne said. Well, I was never a Boy Scout, and the only knot I knew how to tie was a square knot. I suppose I should have looped it around my waist a couple times and tied a fancy double half-hitch or something. He scowled but said nothing. "Now go down there and tie this other rope to the heater," he said. "If the gas drops you, I'll pull you out."

I did as told, easing myself through the hatch and down the ladder into the bunker. I tried holding my breath, but that didn't work. Apparently there was no gas, as I was still able to breathe. The heater was large, maybe 2 feet in diameter at the base and about 3 feet high, all heavy-gauge steel. It was painted a shiny gray, same as the bunker, and had a nicked tag riveted to it stating PROPERTY OF P.F.E. NO. 129. I tied it off (another square knot) and scrambled back out. Laverne was out of shape and I wasn't very strong, and it was all we could do to horse that heater out of the bunker and down onto the platform.

**If he had missed a rung and fallen on me, I would have been squashed flat, leaving only a grease spot on the platform!**

We then wheeled it into the freight room using an old, heavily built wooden dolly with squeaky iron wheels, pending its return to PFE. I assumed Laverne would put it inside the door of the freezer when the car was returned to the yard after being emptied of its lading.

Ironically, that heater never left the freighthouse, and for whatever reason, never was returned to PFE. On infrequent visits over the next 20 years, I would see it and recall when we took it out of the car on that spring day so long ago. I was always going to ask Laverne about it, but never did. I'm sure it was still there when the freight house burned in 1987, after the IC line had been abandoned.

But there is still one unsettling thought about that now-distant day. If it had taken both of us to pull the heater out of the bunker, and I weighed over twice as much as it did, how would Laverne have pulled me out by himself if I had been overcome with gas? There wouldn't have been time to go for help. Fortunately, that didn't happen, and it was "just another day" on the railroad. There would be many more. — Mike McBride

# Atlantic Coast Line memories

## Boyhood train rides to Florida left a lasting impression

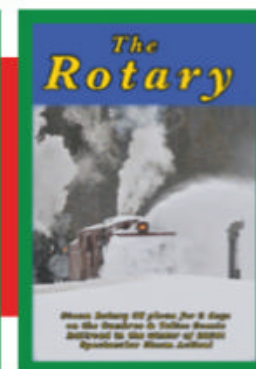
**Sometimes I wonder if my blood runs purple rather than red.** I went to New York University, whose colors were purple and white. Ditto for graduate school at Northwestern University Transportation Center. But the earliest exposure was in the 1950s when I went with my family to Florida three times from New York on — what else? — the Atlantic Coast Line. Those three trips changed my life, and got railroading in my blood. I don't have anything other than memories of the trips, and can't even tell you exactly what year they took place. In all probability, they were between 1955 and 1957, when I was an impressionable 9 to 11 years old.

Our first trip was certainly on the *East*

*Coast Champion*. It was the first time I saw the massive glass-and-steel concourse of Pennsylvania Station. I had no way of knowing then that it would become a haunt of mine in my teenage years ["Penn Station Playground," Fall 2016 CLASSIC TRAINS]. I used to try to mimic the mellifluous voice of the train announcer while taking a shower to get the proper echo. There was a certain rhythm to his voice as he called off the *Champion's* stops, especially the ones in Florida: *Daytona Beach, New Smyrna Beach, Titusville, Cocoa-Rockledge* . . .

Prior to our first trip, I had never been on any train before (except the New York subway), and the *Champion* seemed lux-

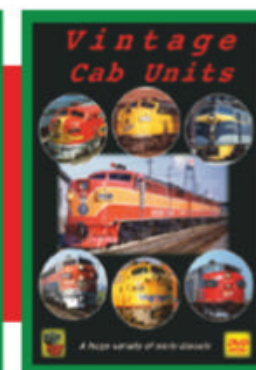
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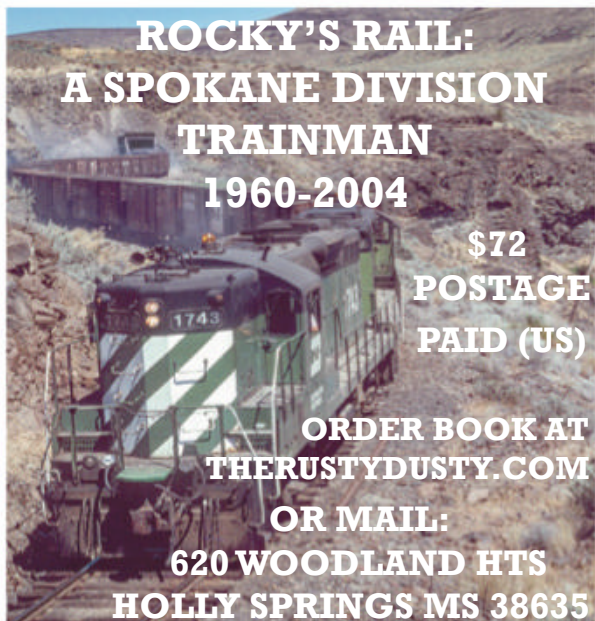
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## The Way It Was



**Atlantic Coast Line's liberal use of purple is evident on the E7s heading the northbound *West Coast Champion* at Winter Park, Fla., in April 1952** W. B. Cox, Krambles-Peterson Archive

urious. At the end of each coach was a frame holding the schedule, in purple, for the train, a feature I've rarely seen since. Even the head-rest covers had a design in shades of purple. My father gave me my first sip of coffee, which was sold by a waiter coming through the coach with a large metal urn. I don't remember much about the coffee, but I do remember the purple paper cup emblazoned with "The Only Double Track Route to Florida." The ticket jacket and timetable carried the same message. I once asked my mother why we rode the ACL instead of the Seaboard. "Oh," she answered, "that line is single track and they have all those accidents." The power of marketing!

On that first trip, we went coach. (When I worked at Amtrak in the early '70s, we used to joke, "There's nothing about an overnight coach that's magic.") My father discovered that the large sofa in the men's lounge was a substitute for a bed, even if in a brightly lit room. At some point, I'd had enough of trying to sleep in my coach seat. Somehow, maybe with my father's guidance, I wound up in the observation car as the train backed into the old Savannah station. The conductor had the door open and a monkey hose in his hand. Spread out before me was a sea of dwarf signals

guiding our movement. That scene has been forever imprinted on my brain.

Jacksonville Union Station left no permanent memory for me, but I can recall sitting in the observation car south of there and watching mile after mile of the double-track Florida East Coast unwind behind me. On our return trip we boarded at the Miami station. To a youngster from New York the signs **COLORED ONLY** on bathrooms and water fountains were a mystery. On our other trips we used the Hollywood station.

We upgraded to Pullman on the two later trips. Sharing a lower berth with my younger brother was better than a coach seat, but just a little. One time I left the section in the middle of the night to use the

rest room. When I returned I forgot which berth was mine and tried to enter the wrong one!

I recall other events and sights from our trips, big and small. Once, another family in our car had a daughter my age who was celebrating a birthday, and they had a birthday cake in their drawing room. I remember the Coca-Cola billboard on a hill in the middle of the Jersey Meadows just after leaving the Hudson River tunnel; it was a landmark for train travelers for decades. In Richmond, Va., my father and I took a stroll while they

**As we used to say  
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that's magic.**



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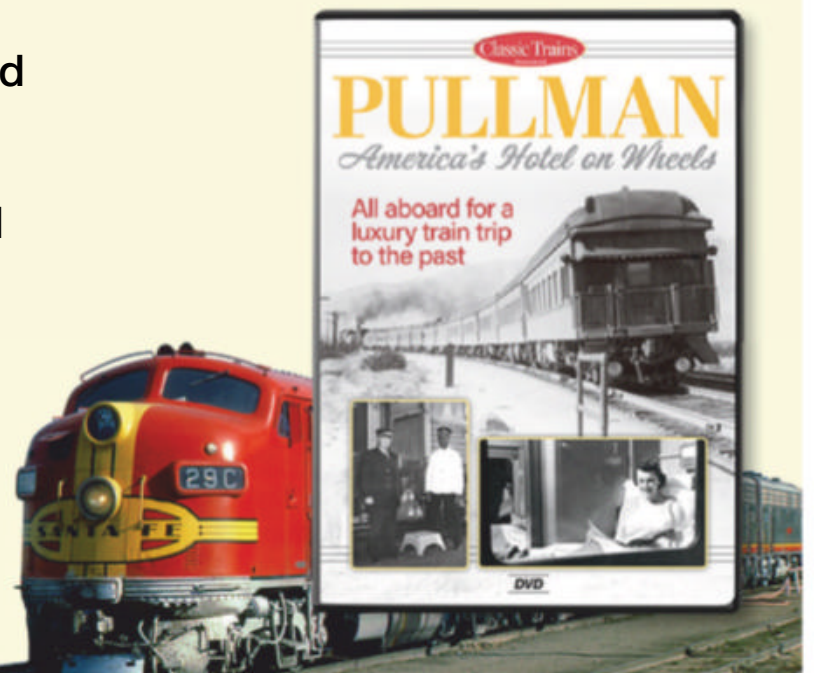
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Of course, the highlight of any trip was meals in the dining car. My two favorites were the pancakes and the club sandwich.

changed engines. He pointed out a Norfolk & Western streamlined 4-8-2 laying over between runs to Norfolk. Although he knew an impressive machine when he saw one, he was not a railfan, and incorrectly identified it as "Big Bertha." Our return trips seemed to be more anticlimactic, but on each one, my father would detrain at Vero Beach and come back with big bags of oranges and grapefruit.

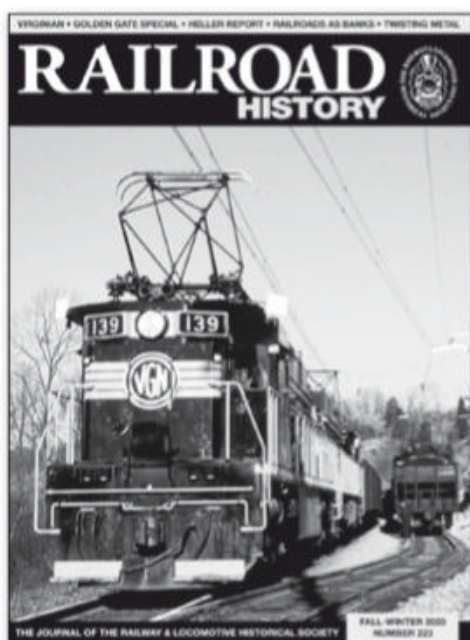
Of course, the highlight of any trip was meals in the dining car. My two favorites were the pancakes and the club sandwich. For years, whenever my mother asked how the pancakes she had made were, I responded, "Pretty good, but not as good as the Atlantic Coast Line!" My father was tougher to please. He thought the grass-fed Florida beef didn't make as tender a steak as the corn-fed ones he was used to.

Almost 20 years after those 1950s trips, I boarded the Seaboard Coast Line's *Florida Special* in Richmond. I was in officers' basic training at Ft. Eustis, Va., and was traveling in uniform. I recounted my pancakes-and-

club-sandwich story to the waiter, and of course I had the pancakes for breakfast and the club sandwich for lunch. A week later I boarded the *Florida Special* in New York. At lunch I had the same waiter as before. I selected the club sandwich on the meal check. "I already ordered it for you," said the waiter, having remembered our conversation of the previous week.

Our third family train trip to Florida almost didn't happen. Unbeknownst to me, my father had decided that we'd fly. Apparently, he called the airline for reservations and was told the inventory wasn't open yet and the airline would call him back. Fortunately for me, they never did, and we were back on the ACL. After that we took no more train trips, except for overnight camp trips to Maine. We traveled neither by rail nor air, as our vacations were mostly to Cape Cod by car. Every spring I would try to convince my parents to ride the train to the western national parks, but I was always unsuccessful. In 1963 I made it to Miami via Chicago (on the ACL of course). The following year I finally crossed Canada by train and became addicted to the Canadian Pacific. But that, as they say, is another story. — Ira Silverman

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In the Fall-Winter 2020 issue of *Railroad History*: An illustrated Virginian Railway roster; America's first transcontinental luxury train, the *Golden Gate Special*; the 1950s plan to consolidate B&O, NYC, and PRR passenger service; an examination of slave labor and North Carolina's railroads; railroads as banks; and more.

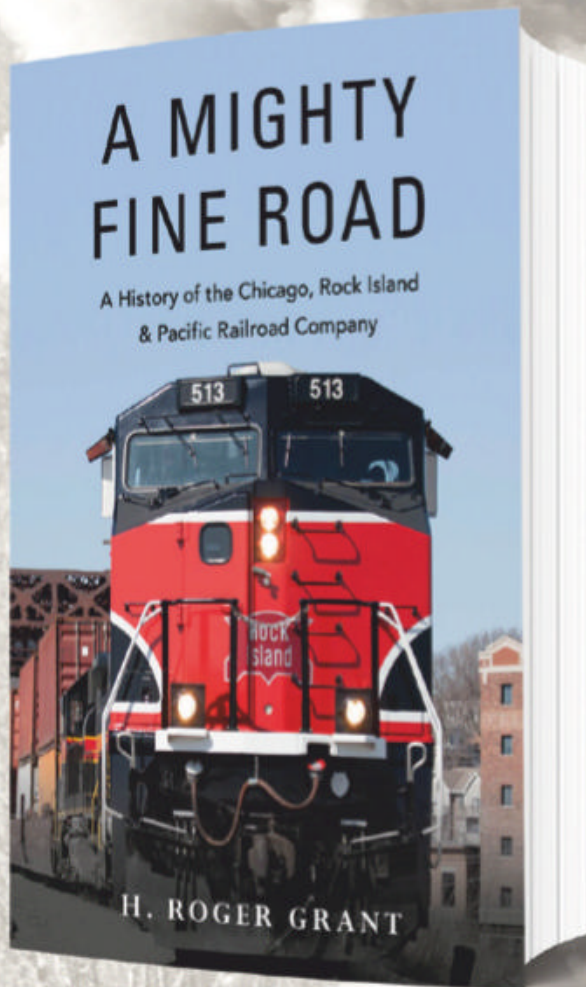
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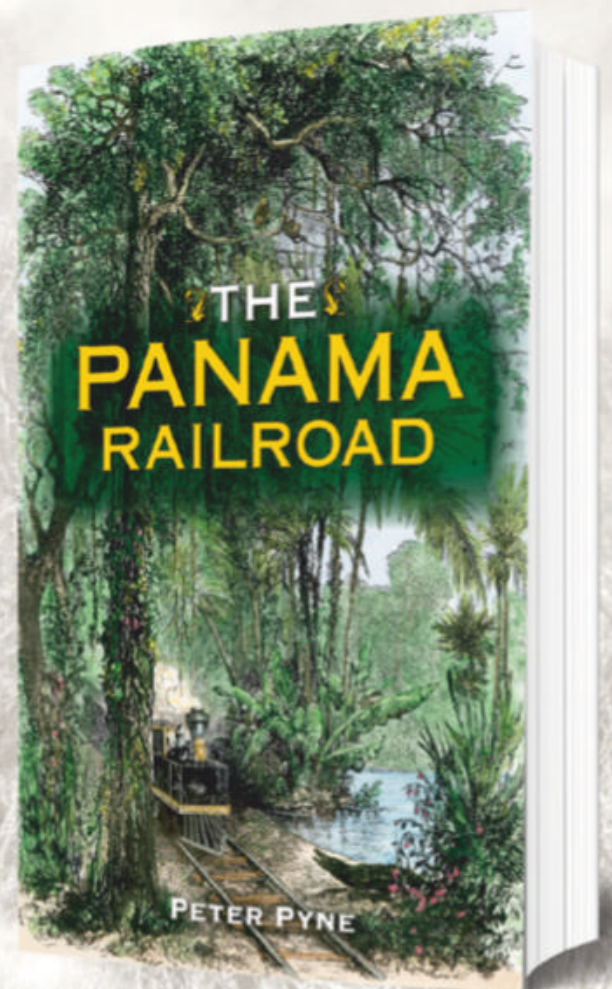


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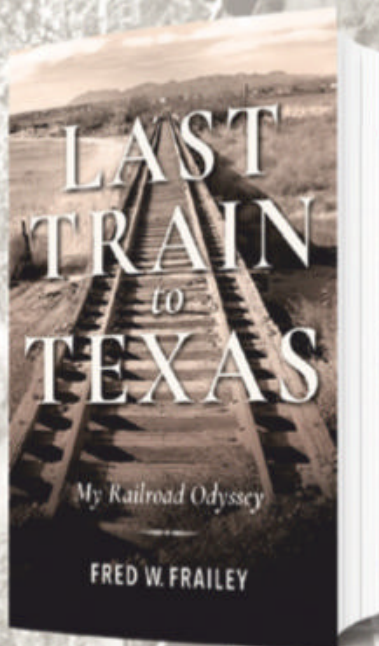
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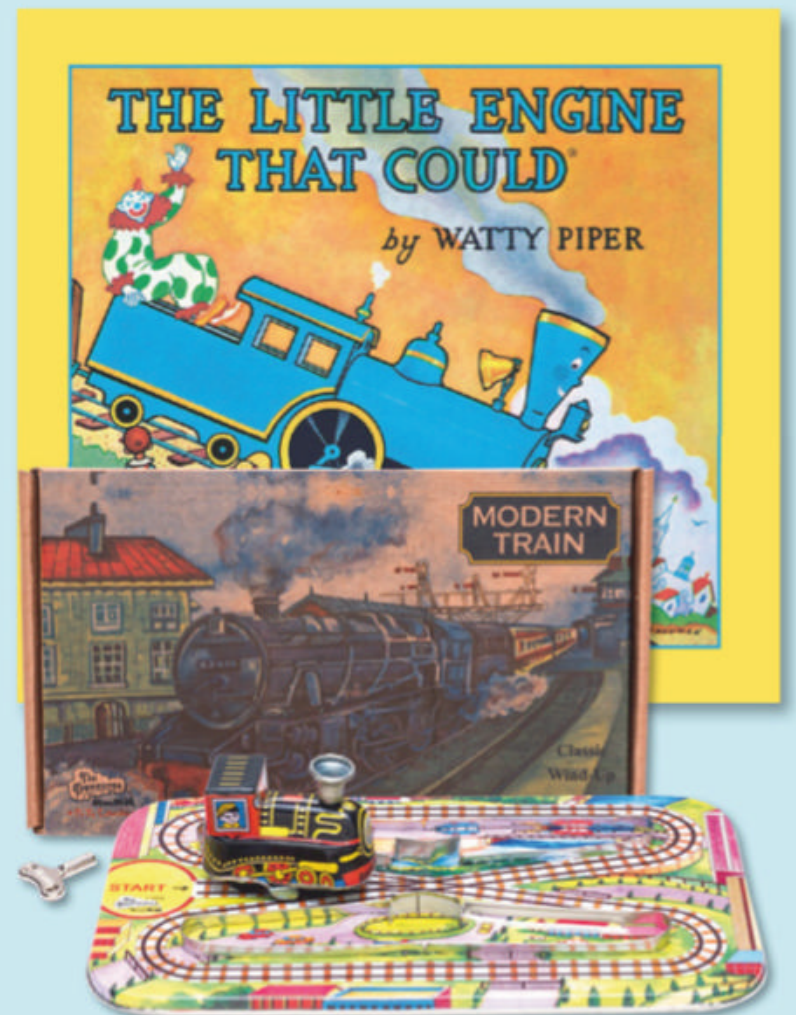
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# Philly's boulevard for Bullets

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Right: Norristown-bound Bullet No. 200 stops at Conshohocken Road in May 1958. Below: Bullet 206 bridges Market-Frankford Subway-Elevated yard tracks as it heads away from 69th Street Terminal (brick building above car) in July 1950. Below center: Beside PRR's electrified main line, Strafford car 160 moves out of P&W's Strafford station in September 1951. Below right: One of Red Arrow's *Liberty Liners* is westbound at Ardmore Avenue in mid-1964. Counterclockwise from right: F. E. Butts, H. M. Stange, W. C. Janssen, J. W. Vigrass; all from Krambles-Peterson Archive









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# Architectural contrasts in Miami

**Florida East Coast Railway** passengers stepping off their train at Miami after 1928 were greeted by an impressive 28-story, 360-foot-tall building. The tallest in the state, the structure formed an impressive backdrop in FEC publicity photos showing lineups of new locomotives. One could be forgiven for thinking the high-rise was the railroad's Miami station and headquarters — but in fact it was the Dade County Courthouse. FEC's general offices were 300 miles north in St. Augustine, and the road's Miami terminal was an unassuming wooden affair built in 1912 that looked more like an outsized small-town depot than the gateway to a sun-splashed metropolis. For

decades, city fathers agitated for a replacement. Plans were well along for a new station at a site 2 miles north when, in January 1963, FEC was rocked by violent labor dispute. The strike diverted FEC passenger trains to the Seaboard Air Line's Miami station, and in fall 1963 the old station in the shadow of the courthouse tower was demolished. The courthouse still stands, the governmental hub of the renamed Miami-Dade County. Stations for the Metrorail rapid-transit system and Brightline's regional rail service flank the site of the FEC depot, seen here a few years after World War II, surrounded by fez-wearing Shriners in town for a convention. FEC: Harry M. Wolfe